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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present volume concludes the work on Ireland, which it has been attempted to render as complete a picture as possible of the country and its inhabitants. To do this it was necessary to go somewhat at large into various topics not usually discussed at the drawing-room table; but it is one of the author's theories, that the exclusion of such topics arises from the sullen pride of the men, and by no means from ignorance, or want of womanly sympathy in the other sex.

Perhaps it will not be thought improper to mention here, that the attempt to *add* to the general stock of knowledge has always been a distinctive feature of the Picturesque Annual. Other books of the same class, however high the tact and talent they may display, are merely compilations, made up in the form of imaginary travels; while the present work consists of narratives of real tours performed by the author. These already comprehend some of the most interesting portions of the Tyrol, the Lombard-Venetian

kingdom, Sardinia, Switzerland, Baden, Darmstadt, France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Russia. The scene of the last two volumes has been Ireland; and, for the sake of bringing in every possible variety, that of the next will include the whole course of the romantic Wye, the pride of England, and supposed by foreign travellers to be unique in Europe.

It may easily be imagined that the author does not make the above explanation, as if taking any merit to himself for performing so delightful a task as that of visiting, in person, the scenes he describes; but he thinks it is not overstepping his duty, to endeavour, by this means, to draw attention to the liberality, enterprize, and public spirit of the proprietor.

It may be added, with reference to a report circulated last year, that the artist, also, has in every case made his drawings upon the spot—even when in order to do this it was necessary to travel through Russia.

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# I R E L A N D.

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## CHAPTER I.

A preliminary chapter which may be skipped over as easily as a preface—Signs of the Times—Connexion between the physical Constitution of Man and Political Freedom—Hunger in all times the great Ring-leader—The real Turbulence of Ireland comparative Passiveness—Explanation—Slight Connexion between the physical Condition of Man and the Moral Virtues—Exemplified in the Character of the Irish Peasant—Both sides of the Medal—The People of Ireland who and what they are—Unfailing Test of an Agitator's Honesty or Talent—Mischievous Delusion of mistaking the Thousands for the People, and the Millions for Nobody—Exemplified in Poland—Russia—Apology of a Political Heretic.

I sit down to give an account of a tour of observation in the northern and western counties of Ireland, without any of the misgivings which attended my task of last year. It turned out that the volume I then published was *not* too grave, or too

stern, or too true for the drawing-room. The moral pictures I thought it my duty to intermingle and contrast with the others, were not found repulsive because of their mournfulness. The book was read by those distinguished classes for whom such works are intended, with a sound and healthy feeling; and the ladies of England felt their womanly sympathies stirred as strongly by unadorned facts, as if these had been embellished, by some more courtly pen, with the gilding of poetry and romance.

The reception of the work by the political journals was another sign of the times. Opposed to all parties, I was treated with unkindness and unfairness by none. The Cerberus of criticism, so far as I have heard, emitted scarcely even a growl. It seemed as if there was something too sacred in the gigantic miseries of a whole nation to admit of inquiry into the unskilfulness of the pen which portrayed them. Men judge of the direction of a storm by the course of a straw tossed up into the troubled air; and, in like manner, I venture to predict, from the fate of my slight performance, that better days for Ireland are fast approaching.

The physical condition of men has less to do with their moral character, and more with their political freedom, than is usually supposed. Almost all great popular revolts have had liberty for their watchword, but hunger for their ringleader. Direct taxation is the tyrant par excellence, not



because it is more oppressive than indirect taxation—for in most countries it is vastly less so—but because it appears to snatch, with undisguised fingers, at the *residue* of a man's income. Thus in the middle ages, in some countries, the hearth tax, and in others, the poll tax, set all Europe in arms. In France the great revolution was no doubt produced by a variety of concurring causes; yet, if the people, nobles and all, had not been poor, there would at that time have been no revolution. In England, to this day, the standard of our harmless insurrections is a loaf of bread stuck on the point of a spear.

With the page of history open before us, to expect tranquillity in Ireland, where the great body of the people are starving, would betray a puerility of mind very remarkable in a grown person. To desire it, under such circumstances, would, to coin a mild expression, be un-English. The outrages perpetrated there are frequently shocking in themselves, but they are very trifling effects indeed of such a cause. In south or north Britain, I have no hesitation in saying, that the immediate result would be a general insurrection and massacre.

The proper question ought to be, not why such things take place in Ireland, but, why so few take place compared with the exciting cause? The answer to this will suggest itself to every body. The great mass of the nation were till lately in the situation of a conquered people; and the houses of the

protestant gentry were interspersed like garrisons throughout the country to keep them down. The grandsire, the father, the child, all were born in the house of bondage; and, like the Israelites in Egypt, when they showed any signs of discontent, their chains were only drawn the tighter. Insurrection after insurrection was quenched in blood, till the spirit of the people was broken; and hence the *submissiveness* of the Irish character of to-day—a word which I use in defiance of the ridicule of the unreflecting, or the superficially informed.

When I say the physical condition of men has but little to do with the moral virtues, I merely state a fact deduced from my own personal observation in various countries in which I have travelled; but I have no room to reason upon it here. The Irish peasant has none of the vices which might be thought inseparable from his physical condition. He is honest, so far as the goods of his neighbour are concerned; he is generous and charitable; he is a faithful husband, and a tender father. A part of this character, I know, has been denied; and I notice it the rather, that Mr. Inglis, with whom I agree on numerous points, has fallen into the error. He mentions the “less affection that exists between man and wife among the country people in Ireland than is found to adorn domestic life in the humbler spheres on the other side of the water;” and he accounts for it by marriage being in the former country, “seldom the result of long and tried affection

on both sides, but either a rash step taken by unthinking children, or else a mere mercenary bargain." I suspect that Mr. Inglis heard of the mercenary marriages first, and then described the "less affection" as a matter of course. However this may be, while admitting the cause, I deny the effect. The ties of family affection are nowhere else in the world more strong than in an Irish cabin. It seems as if mutual deprivation, and mutual misery, served to the hapless pair instead of the links of love; and, as I have said in last year's volume, that the cottage group drew near to one another, in heart as well as in body, for mutual warmth. In this class of society, conjugal infidelity, more especially on the part of the wife, is almost unknown; and there are numerous instances of wives emigrating alone to America, or the colonies, and, after years of toil, and pinching economy, sending home a remittance to enable their husbands to join them.

But I by no means intend to represent the Irish peasant as

"A faultless monster whom the world ne'er saw."

Being destitute of the hope of bettering his condition, he is lazy and improvident; being ignorant, he is often brutal and ferocious; and being brought up in the thrall of oppression, he is almost always insincere. This last taint, indeed, belongs, in a greater or less degree—although, of course, with a

multitude of individual exceptions, to the character of the whole nation; and its origin may be traced with perfect clearness by any one who will take the trouble of wandering through the uninteresting mazes of Irish history.

The PEOPLE of Ireland, I repeat again and again—the six millions out of eight—are those on whom the eyes of civilized mankind ought to be fixed. No question of political right, or national pride, can by possibility affect a peasantry living on the food of the stall-fed cattle of their masters, and dying from the insufficiency of the supply of that food. The vital question is not the relative position of Ireland with England, but of the labourers of Ireland with the landlords.

Whenever the People of Ireland are mentioned—on the hustings—in the senate—in after-dinner speeches—in political toasts—let it be remembered that the expression designates a people inhabiting huts more comfortless than those of any savages yet discovered, and in general subsisting solely on a limited, and often interrupted supply of the worst species of potatoe. If this indisputable fact be kept continually in sight, the least informed men will be able to judge of the motives of the orator, the aptness of his remarks, and the expediency of his proposals. The upper classes of Ireland have been too long taken for the *people*, the two millions for the eight millions; and the fulness of time has now arrived for the delusion to cease.

This kind of delusion, however, is widely spread, and deeply rooted. There is hardly a nation by whom its baleful presence is unfelt, hardly a country where it does not retard the progress of liberty and civilization. But it is a delusion, unfortunately, which in some cases is wrought up with our best and holiest feelings. What bosom does *not* respond to the cries of the gallant nobles of Poland in their war of liberty? What bosom *does* feel for the People of Poland, chained like brutes to the soil they cultivate? The liberty here meant is liberty for the nobles; for hitherto the serfs, excepting in the ravages of war, have received nothing but benefits from the tyrant Nicholas. Not, it may well be supposed, from public principle, but out of mere revenge; the autocrat has done more, at one blow, for the people of Poland than the nobles in all their generations. He has converted into useful citizens that portion of the nobility who retained their feudal privileges, even when sunk so low in poverty as to labour on the grounds of the serfs for a morsel of bread; and by compelling the Jews to serve personally in the army, he has, in a great measure, brought those who before were excrescences and blood-suckers into the pale of the commonwealth. But let me not be understood as finding fault with that chivalrous feeling which unites in brotherhood with the Polish nobles every manly spirit in Europe. I only wish this feeling were extended far enough to embrace the whole nation.

With regard to Russia, again, there are few among us who would not have rejoiced, had the conspiracy against the life of the emperor been successful, provided tyranny had fallen with the tyrant. But what government would have been substituted? A free government for the few hundred thousand nobles, and tenfold chains for the tens of millions of the people! The serfs of the emperor are little more than nominally such, while those of the nobles are, to all intents and purposes, slaves. A revolution in Russia ought to commence with the lower classes, who must be made men before they can possibly become citizens. The small body of the nobles are far more illiberal and obdurate taskmasters than the emperor; and their emancipation from his control would only have the effect of riveting and perpetuating the chains of the people.

These sentiments, I know, will by some be called political heresies, and more especially when put forth by one who has always professed, and advocated, what are called liberal principles. The truth is, I suspect, that my principles are too really liberal to please even my own party. A London journal of the highest talent, and, so far as I know, of unquestioned honesty, reproached me with some bitterness, in a notice of last year's volume, for an alleged affectation of originality in my Irish theories. Now I declare most solemnly, that if they be original—which I cannot believe—I am heartily sorry for it. If I had the advantage of being per-

sonally known to the editor, he would not suppose me capable of insincerity on such a subject. I entreat him to take this on my own word for the present ; and instead of accusing me of disingenuousness, or even of mere literary trifling, to prove, if he can, wherein I am wrong. But let him understand, that I do not give this challenge either from valour or vanity. I feel deeply interested in the subject ; and I shall be as glad to see my opinions examined by an able adversary, as I shall always be ready to defend, or retract them, according as truth and honesty dictate.

## CHAPTER II.

Appearance of the country north of Dublin—Drogheda—The broken Heart—Subterranean Temple—Dundalk—Brutal Inhumanity of a Landlord—Newry—Geographical Causes of Prosperity—Employment not the sole want of Ireland—Necessity of a Poor Law—Effects of the present System of Relief—Inapplicability of the Scottish System to Ireland—Mendicants and Pauper Peasants—Habitual Abstinence of the Irish—Their fixed position with regard to Food and its Moral and Physical Consequences—Irish meaning of the word Destitution—The Irishman in England and the Englishman in Ireland—Foundation of the Author's opinion on the Poor-law Question—Great national Benefits unconnected with Pauperism which may be expected from the Introduction of the Union Workhouse System.

HAVING, in my former tour, traversed the southern counties, I left Dublin, on the present occasion, to proceed northward. My arrangements, having strict reference to the picturesque of the journey, did not admit of a very close examination of the county Louth, in the greater part of which the scenery is but little interesting, or striking. For a considerable distance beyond Dublin, the country was flat and uninviting to an artist; and indeed



this was its prevailing character, till the fine bay of Carlingford appeared, with the majestic hills of Down beyond.

To a traveller coming from the south, notwithstanding, this flat country will be exceedingly agreeable. There is not a greater difference between the moral aspect of Ireland and England, than there is between the moral aspect of the country to the south of Dublin and that to the north. The cottages here are decidedly neat, for Irish cottages; they are almost always washed with lime as white as snow; and not unfrequent attempts at a little garden in front, in the English style, indicate an advancement in civilization, if not in wealth.\*

In the course of a few hours' ride, I passed some ruins which, on account of the tameness of their situation, would hardly elicit a question from the traveller; and at length reached Drogheda, and the Boyne water. I think it was before this, that on arriving at a village, we were amused by the spectacle of a dog waiting to receive the mail-bag, and trotting away with it as gravely as a post-master could do for his life.

Drogheda is a respectable-looking, nay, almost

\* I find the very reverse of this picture given by Mr. Inglis. The cause of the discrepancy may be, that he came from the north, the seat of manufactures and civilization, and I from the south. I persuade myself, also, that the severity of the illness under which he then laboured may have had some effect in unfitting his mind for receiving cheerful impressions.

handsome town, and, when I was there, appeared to be full of business and bustle.

St. Peter's church is rather a distinguished edifice, in the Greek taste, and stands upon the site of the ancient building, which was one of the greatest ecclesiastical establishments in Ireland. Its spire, overthrown by a tempest nearly two centuries ago, is said to have been the loftiest in the world ! The old church, too, was distinguished as the scene of one of Cromwell's butcheries ; for the citizens flying there for refuge, this ruthless soldier of the Covenant, who would have made an admirable prophet-captain of the Israelites, massacred two thousand of them, and set fire to the building. The banks of the Boyne, and indeed a considerable part of this quarter of the country, are thickly studded with the ruins of small churches ; which, when come upon suddenly by the pedestrian, although by no means remarkable in point of architecture, are often exceedingly interesting. But, about five miles from the town are some fragments, which, scanty as they are, would of themselves make it worth an antiquarian's while to visit Ireland. These are the remains of the splendid abbey of Mellifont. There is a simple anecdote connected with this locality which I cannot refrain from giving. I give it in the words of Mr. Robert Armstrong, a native of the vicinity of Mellifont, formerly a journeyman housepainter, and now the parish schoolmaster of Raheny.

“ About forty years since, a young man in the

neighbourhood paid his addresses to a young woman, a farmer's daughter, and, although his attentions were not approved of by her friends, yet she encouraged him to hope, and eventually promised to marry him. His circumstances not being the best, and believing he might trust to her fidelity, he was inclined to defer the ceremony until he could realize a competence, or sufficient to make her comfortable ; but Mary, being sought after by many, pressed by her parents to decide, and believing his delay arose from indifference, at length became dissatisfied, and told him she would wait no longer, but would marry the first man who would ask her. He, thinking her declaration arose from a sudden caprice, carelessly told her to do so ; and they parted in anger.

“The miller of Mellifont was a douse, warm, middle aged bachelor, boorish in his appearance, and sottish in his manners, but withal having the *name of money* and a comfortable situation in the mill, he was far from being an object of indifference to the parents of unmarried females. Having long regarded Mary with a wistful eye, and been often proposed for her acceptance by her friends, she now, while warm with indignation against James, for what she considered his falsehood, consented to marry him ; and, requesting it might be done as soon as possible, no time was lost, every thing was prepared for the wedding, and before twenty-four hours she was his wife.

“ Among the guests invited, James was not forgotten ; perhaps she wished to enjoy a sort of triumph over him, and prove she could marry without him. He attended, but was downcast and sorrowful, taking no part in the boisterous merriment so general at country weddings, and appearing to pay no attention to what was passing around him. After the bride had retired for the night, her husband, the miller, having indulged rather freely, was carried up in a state of insensibility and laid beside her, and the lights being removed, she had full leisure to reflect on her hasty conduct and her rash treatment of James, who she now found possessed her heart, although her hand was another’s. Ere long she perceived a figure seated near the bed’s foot, and eagerly asking, ‘ Who is that ? ’ was answered by James, ‘ It is me, Mary, don’t be alarmed.’ Why, James,’ said she, ‘ this is very improper conduct ; I am now the wife of another, and if my husband wakens, or any person sees you here, it will destroy me ; you must leave that, or I will call the people in.’ ‘ I can’t, Mary,’ said he, ‘ for my heart is breaking.’ She still insisted he should leave her, but still received no other answer than ‘ Mary, I can’t, for my heart is breaking.’

“ At length he sunk exhausted on the bed ; Mary, greatly alarmed, called aloud : and the company coming in, found him dead on the bed’s foot, his heart having really broken.

“ All was now confusion, his body was conveyed

to his residence a few fields distant, and his friends having in vain tried every method to restore him, he was laid out to be waked. The practice then was, to put the body 'under board,' that is, on planks, laid on the under frame of a large table, over which a sheet was placed, which, falling down over the ends and sides, entirely concealed the corpse : on the table they placed candles, tobacco, pipes, &c.

"He was waked for two days, and all the neighbourhood made poor Mary the object of their execration and reproach. She never left her apartment, but sat seemingly unconscious of every thing, and bewildered with anguish. However, on the second night she was missed ; she had left her house unperceived, and had gone no one knew whither, and as she could not be found after the strictest search, it was supposed she had drowned herself in the river.

"In the morning preparations were made for burying James, but upon proceeding to put his body into the coffin, they found unfortunate Mary dead beside him. She had stolen unperceived under the table, and having insinuated her arm under his head, and placed his arm round her neck, she had in that position bid adieu to all her sorrows.

"Little now remains to be told ; they were buried in one grave in Mellifont Abbey, and although in life they were separated, in death they were not divided."

The best excursion from Drogheda is to the village of Slane, along the Boyne river, the route presenting, during its distance of six miles, a very pleasing variety of the picturesque. Near the village, at New Grange, is the curious subterranean temple—if temple it be—which has puzzled so many antiquarians. It is a kind of cavern, in a mound of considerable size, and is reached by means of a gallery, making together the figure of a cross. In the recess forming one arm of the cross, there is a rude vase of stone three feet and a half long, and nearly as deep. In the other arm there are the fragments of another vessel of the same kind; but tradition affords no clue to their date or purpose.

From Drogheda to Newry the country is altogether uninteresting. The principal intermediate place is Dundalk, where the first cambrie manufacture in Ireland was established. It is the assize town of the county; but in ancient times it was a royal city. The harbour is shallow and inconvenient, yet the town notwithstanding has a thriving appearance; and I learnt that a pin manufactory is in operation there, which alone gives employment to five hundred children.

“In passing along the road,” says the author of the “Northern Tourist,” who wrote eight years ago, “the traveller will observe the ruins of a number of cabins, out of which, to please the whim of a noble proprietor, the miserable tenantry were driven some few years since, in the depth of winter, by

having the thatch stripped off them while yet inhabited, the leases having expired, and without their having a spot in which to shelter their defenceless heads from "the pelting of the pitiless storm." In commenting on this, the author remarks that "when a man arrives at that state in which he can say to himself, 'I cannot be worse,' he becomes a fit tool for agitators, and a ready instrument wherewith to perpetrate the most desperate crimes." This is true; but Mr. Hardy should have added, that at such a moment agitation becomes a virtue. I need hardly say, however, that I do not mean that sort of agitation which is intended merely to give political dignity to the *landlords* of the destitute and desperate peasantry.

As we approach Newry, the scenery becomes more striking; and the hills on the left of the road, more especially, are remarkable enough to demand a visit from the traveller who has time at his disposal. On the summit of one of them there is a lake of limpid water, with abundance of fish; and in the side of another there is the Witch's Cave, the local habitation of many a wild tradition. The inhabitants of this mountainous district, although they frequently visit the town with loads of turf, show but little of town refinement. They are in fact in nearly the same state of rudeness as when their fastnesses were the haunt of the famous robber Redmond O'Hanlon, in the reign of George the Second.

Newry is quite a handsome town; and like every other town in Ireland which is well adapted, in point of situation, for an entrepôt, it is in a flourishing condition. This remark, and the natural inference which must follow it, cannot fail to have struck the reader of our former volume. The Irish peasantry, I repeat, are ignorant, lazy, and improvident; but they are so because they are without the hope of bettering their condition by their own efforts. In those parts of the country where skill and labour meet with their natural reward, a change of character is seen, and the favoured towns advance at the usual rate of progression. When the island shall be intersected by canals and railways, answering the purpose of geographical advantages, a similar change will be perceptible, and not till then, in the whole people.

But canals and railways *cannot* be undertaken with effect just at present, because of the existence of the very qualities which they are meant to eradicate. It is idle to say, "Give the Irish employment, and that is all they want." Even were it possible to introduce sufficient capital into a country which seems every day to border on a political convulsion, it would be folly to expect the character of the people to change all at once, as if at the bidding of some magic spell. In the towns alluded to above, the partial change now observable has come gradually on, in the course of time and circumstances; and if abundant work were to be provided at this



moment for every man, woman, and child in Ireland, we should still have to wait for the moral change in the people.

There is no doubt that employment is the remedy ; but if administered without preparation, it will fail. There are the habits of centuries to conquer. Habitual laziness, habitual improvidence, habitual mendicancy are not to be subdued at once throughout the whole island by the mere offer of work. Want of employment is the cause of the evil, but employment will not operate of itself as an effectual remedy. In like manner, in the natural body, want of food for a great length of time may be the cause of a general debility in the system, and this cannot be cured by merely administering food. The offer of employment will not put an end to that portion of mendicancy which is caused by *disinclination* to work ; neither will it put an end to that portion which is caused by *inability* to work. If all the able and willing labourers were in full employment to-morrow, there would still be a vast mass of destitution in the country. How is this to be dealt with ? After giving full employment to the people—(supposing it possible, for the sake of argument, to do so under present circumstances)—are we to leave the poor as heretofore to the customs and sympathies of the labouring classes ? If we do so, the increase of the fund thus supplied will operate as a premium upon beggary ; mendicancy will become a flourishing trade ; and the comparatively

small portion of destitution which may exist at the outset will in time infect and corrupt even the healthy parts of the social system. Or will government take the poor under its own protection? Will it assume and exercise the power of putting down professional mendicancy? Will it protect industry from the claims of laziness, which transmitted custom has made sacred? If the legislature will not do this, it will not do its duty.

In Ireland, as in every other country, with or without poor laws, the poor are supported at this moment; but they are supported in a way which confirms—and which probably has formed—the vagrant habits of the people, and which, while relieving destitution for the time, extends and perpetuates it. By this mode, it is not merely the destitute who are relieved from the resources of those who are just less destitute themselves; custom has made relief *to all applicants* compulsory: and thus not only destitution, but idleness, vice, and imposture fasten like incubi upon the energies of industry. By this mode, the burden weighs almost exclusively upon the poorer classes—upon those who are themselves trembling on the verge of beggary; and thus by the action and reaction of cause and effect, a portion of the people, amounting to one-fourth of the entire population, are kept poor—alternating only between the privations of unassisted poverty, and the degradation of avowed mendicancy. In a country like England, the principle

of a Poor Law may be made a matter of dispute. It is at least susceptible of argument on both sides : but it seems to me, that in Ireland, the necessity for a system of public relief to the destitute is so obvious as to require no illustration whatever.\*

Even the advocates of a Poor Law, however, are so much enamoured of the voluntary system of relief (which has done such wonders for Ireland!) that they wish at least to incorporate it with the legal provision. They appear to be misled by the successful operation of the mixed system in Scotland, forgetting the dissimilarity in the condition of the two countries. In Scotland the people tax themselves ; but instead of giving away the money in childish and indiscriminate charity, they pay it into the hands of the church, to be distributed according to the ascertained wants of the poor.

The rural beggars there are sometimes invited to sit down by the fireside ; but in general, when relieved at all, they receive a handful of meal, or a piece of oaten-cake, at the door. In Ireland, they walk without ceremony, into the cottage, saying, as they enter, "God save all here ;" and, on hearing the customary reply, "God save you kindly," they establish themselves in one of the best places round

\* In this chapter I make free use of a pamphlet I have lately published, but which, of course, has gone into the hands only of certain members of parliament, entitled "A Bystander's View of the Irish Poor Law Question."

the hearth, and dip their hands into the family pot of potatoes. In Scotland, in addition to such casual charity, the peasant thinks it not only a religious duty, but a duty, the performance of which involves his worldly respectability, to drop a penny or a halfpenny into the plate at the church-door on Sundays and fast days. On still more solemn occasions the donation is more liberal, as we learn from the profane poet—

“ A greedy glour black bonnet throws,  
An’ we maun draw our tippence.”

This is the practice—always conjointly with casual charity, and modified in the amount of the contribution—from the nobility downwards; and the fund so collected, an assessment being only occasionally necessary, forms the principal provision for the Scottish poor. In Ireland, no such fund could, by possibility, be collected, either as regards amount or regularity. There the labourers, and occupiers not employing labourers, amount, with their families, to considerably more than half of the entire population of the country; and in this class a contribution in money is altogether out of the question. It could not be wrung from them by any legislative enactment, under any penalty whatever, and for this reason, that they do not feed the poor from their superabundance, but from their

want. If the beggar does not enter before the meal is finished, they eat the potatoes themselves; and this is a most important fact as regards the whole Poor Law question.

The effects of destitution in Ireland are, to create, firstly, as in all other countries, professional mendicancy; and, secondly, to an extent greater than in any other country, occasional mendicancy. To the eye of the passing stranger these two are identical; because the outward characteristic is the same in both—rags; and because in no other country are we accustomed to see, begging publicly, persons who are not only not mendicants, in the usual meaning of the word, but who are, in all probability, *occupiers of land*. In order to understand this distinction, it is necessary, not merely to have travelled in Ireland, but to have resided there; not merely to have passed in a carriage along the highways, but to have wandered, on foot, along the by-ways; not merely to have traversed the streets of the towns and cities, but to have inspected the villages, and farm-houses, and solitary huts of the country. In fact, to understand this distinction in the population, is to understand Ireland.

The mendicants are, in my opinion, much less numerous than has been suspected by any writer on Ireland: and, supposing I am correct, the mistake is easily explained. The mendicants haunt almost exclusively the towns, and the villages where there are relays of horses. They flaunt their rags and

sores in the eyes of the stranger, and clamorously demand relief. Let any one returning from a comprehensive tour in Ireland divest his mind as much as possible of preconceived notions, and bethink himself of what average number of such tormentors he may have met with at the places through which his vehicle passed ; and he will approximate, with tolerable precision, to the exceedingly small number of thousands of the Irish mendicants.

Nothing on the other hand, can be more unobtrusive than the pauper peasants. They are dressed in rags, it is true—filthy, miserable rags—but this is so common in Ireland among the labourers and small farmers, that it would not distinguish the class. If you see, however, a ragged mother, with a baby on her back, and two or three ragged children at her heels, and more rarely, the ragged father bringing up the rear ;—if you see this melancholy cortège glide into the huts by the roadside, or defile into the successive lanes leading to the farm-houses ; and more especially, if in passing by your side, you mark that the eyes of the parents are bent upon the ground, or their heads turned away, or their straight-forward looks fixed upon vacancy, in the dull, cold apathy of despair—you may conclude, with absolute certainty, that you have seen a family of pauper peasants, in one of their pilgrimages to solicit the aid of those who are only just less destitute than themselves. These occasional mendicants almost never beg except at the

huts and farm-houses; they rarely visit the gentlemen's seats—and my breast swells with scorn and indignation while I relate the fact; and they turn an unregarding look upon the well-dressed, and apparently wealthy passers-by, as if they were creatures of a different race, between whom and them no bond of human sympathy existed. I have myself wandered on foot through the most pauperized districts in Ireland, at various seasons of the year, and I declare solemnly, I was never asked for alms on more than two or three occasions, except in the towns, and at the relay stations!

The grand objection urged by the enemies of a Poor Law is, that the amount of destitution, whether exhibited in its form of occasional or professional mendicancy, is so great that no public fund could relieve it. If this means anything at all, it means that a country which at the present moment provides not only for the really poor, but for a host of impostors, could not, if the pauper population were properly sifted, provide for the really poor alone. It means that a country where the poor and the lazy are, at the present moment, supported by the just less poor, could not provide for real destitution, if the fund were levied also on the rich. This is not stating the argument unfairly, because it never was proposed to make the workhouses serve as a premium upon idleness. On the contrary, it was proposed from the outset that they were to be made just the next best thing to actual starvation,

and that even this miserable alternative was not to be left to the option of the poor, but granted only after due investigation of the case by responsible officers.

The dread of the workhouses being swamped by the number of applications is the more singular, as many of the objectors profess themselves to be well acquainted with the remarkable fact—remarkable in the apparent contradictions it involves in the character of the people—that the Irish, in the midst of all that improvidence arising from temperament and circumstances, which distinguishes them as a nation, possess in a high degree what may be called an instinct of abstinence, in contradistinction to the prudence arising from reflection and forethought. I do not talk of this quality in its occasional exercise, but as forming a distinguishing trait in the character of the people ; and, before I show the important reference it bears to the question before us, let me explain the cause of its existence in what would appear, at first sight, a very unnatural soil.

The lower animals in general, no matter in what circumstances they may be placed, devour as much of the food that is within their reach as their appetites permit. They consume in one day the provision for a week, and starve for the remaining six days. It belongs only to beings of a higher grade in creation, however mean their intellect and confined their experience, in comparison with those of their own class, to husband the store they possess,



and when the fund is too small, to settle the demands of nature, so to speak, by a composition paid in instalments. When the amount of the store is in any degree uncertain, they are apt to reason rather by their hopes than their judgment, and the course of action which results from this mistake is what is commonly called improvidence ; but, when the amount is absolutely certain, and has been so throughout their experience, no matter how wildly extravagant their conduct may be in other respects, they are provident in this.

Such is the present situation of the Irish peasantry. There is no principle of change either in their moral or physical position. Their fortunes are, to all appearance, as fixed as if they existed under the stereotyped form of Eastern civilization. They know by their own experience, by the lessons of their parents, by the traditions handed down from their remote ancestors, that the amount of their store is miserably short of the regular demands of nature, and they act accordingly. They know from the inadequacy of their earnings, and the nature of the crop on which they depend, that they are to be in want of food for a certain determinate portion of the year, which they can point to in the calendar ; and they prepare—from the most ignorant to the best informed, from the finest specimen of our nature in its rude state down to the human clod that is little different, except in form, from the brute—for that disastrous period.

The fixed position of the Irish peasant with regard to food, affects, of nature and necessity, his general habits. It lowers the tone of his mind ; it operates as an impassable bar to ambition ; it extinguishes the desire for all the superfluities of civilized society that are not connected with animal gratification ; it makes him contented to live in a cold, damp dwelling, without neatness or comfort of any kind, which a little industry, even without capital, might render warm, dry, neat, and comfortable ; it makes it easy for him, without any feeling of shame or abasement, to walk to and fro upon the earth, with his wife and children, in rags which an English beggar would scorn to pick up from a dunghill : it unfits him for steady and habitual labour, and in the succession of cause and effect, makes him a wanderer, a lounge, a basker in the sun, a gossip, and a liar. Having no other resources, he takes refuge in the animal gratifications ; especially in those which deaden the sense of misery, or illumine the mind with a factitious and momentary hope. He smokes to excess when he can procure tobacco ; he drinks to excess when he can procure whisky ; he marries even before his sexual passions have had time to acquire intensity. On the other hand, he possesses the virtue of hospitality, which, indeed, is rarely absent in poor and rude societies ; he loves his children, to whom he looks forward for support, and they, by a natural reaction, love him ; he is, to a certain degree, con-

timen, his early marriage leaving him no excuse for being otherwise; he is brave, because he is desperate; he is proud of his country, because he is acquainted only with its fabulous history, and because he has nothing else to be proud of.

It will at once be acknowledged by any reflecting person, that to a peasantry in this condition, a workhouse on the English plan, with its strict rules, its prison-like confinement, its methodical industry, its abstinence from sensual gratification, must be neither more nor less than just the next worst thing to actual starvation. The pauper peasantry would not accept of the privilege if they possessed any alternative; and the real question is, what is the probable number of those who would possess no alternative?

“If workhouses were determined upon for Ireland,” say the Commissioners of Inquiry, “as an actual means of relief, they must be established for the purpose of setting vast numbers of unemployed persons to work within them, and of so providing for such persons and their families. Now, according to the third table annexed, we cannot estimate the number of persons in Ireland out of work and in distress during thirty weeks of the year at less than 585,000, nor the number of persons dependent upon them at less than 1,800,000, making, in the whole, 2,385,000.” This calculation has been sifted in every possible way; but, for my part, I

think the Commissioners have a much better chance of being correct in their facts than any body else.

The question is, what construction they mean should be put upon the expression, "out of work and in distress." The enemies of a Poor Law assume that it means *destitute* in the strictest sense of the word; and they are justified in doing so, since the Commissioners of Inquiry add, with much gravity, that they consider it morally, indeed physically, impossible to provide accommodation in a workhouse for 2,385,000 persons, or even to attempt it with safety. But, on the other hand, they are not justified in doing so; for the same Commissioners, in the very same page of their report, state that nothing of the kind would be necessary, their "conviction" being, "that the able-bodied in general, and their families, would endure any misery, rather than make a workhouse their domicile." The plain matter of fact is, that destitution in Ireland is a different thing from destitution in England. In the latter country, the agricultural population, with the exception of that of some of the northern counties, is *destitute*, for a certain period, every winter; the earnings of the labourers being, at that time, inadequate to the support of their families. Yet few of these people enter the workhouse. In Ireland, in like manner, the people are *destitute* for a portion of every year; but not to an extent that would compel persons of their habits,

and accustomed to their privations, to enter the workhouse. Habit is every thing. An English labourer would starve in Ireland, and an Irish labourer does nothing more than live in England. Potatoes and salt, even in abundance, would not keep an Englishman alive—he would die of the want of his little comforts rendered necessary by habit; while the Irishman, with his tenfold wages, continues to live, as at home, in filth and misery, spending the entire surplus in the debauchery of a savage. This picture I take from Mr. Lewis's Report, quoted by the Commissioners of Inquiry as a part of their materials.

For my part, I pretend to give no opinion as to the number of the really destitute, or in other words, of those who will require to receive workhouse relief. All I know is, that at this moment, a single class of the people, or little more than a single class, provides for the destitute, the lazy, and the fraudulent; while under the proposed system, all classes of the people, contributing together, will have to provide for the destitute alone. On this fact, which cannot be controverted, I found my opinion in favour of the principle of a Poor Law for Ireland. As for the details of the measure now before Parliament, they are another matter, and at any rate this is not the place to discuss them.

Of all the difficulties to be encountered, should the bill pass into a law, the most harassing will arise from the want of local machinery ready made. The

Irish—through no fault of theirs!—are at this moment wholly unacquainted with public business. They have neither the sturdy tradesmen, nor, in any thing like the same proportion, the shrewd farmers of England; and, in most cases, recourse must be had almost exclusively to the gentry. As for the smaller tenants of the land, who in England are very nearly assimilated, in point of information and intelligence, to the greater, in Ireland they are not distinguishable, even in dress and manners, from the common labourers. Although the machinery, however, is not yet in being, the materials are in as great perfection as elsewhere; and no inconsiderable portion of the benefit I expect from a Poor Law will consist of the 'change it will produce upon the surface of society. It will go far towards *creating* the wanting classes. It will bring together the now distinct *castes* of the people. It will give the lower orders the habit of attending to, and thinking about, their own wants, instead of looking as hitherto, with more than childish helplessness, for some political miracle. It will afford, as it were, numerous tangible points for laying hold of the minds of men, who are at present moved only in great masses, stirred by the views of religious or political enthusiasts. Civilization never comes in the lump. It works its way in detail; and, until Irish society is broken into the small *selfish* circles of England, it will be impossible to operate upon it with advantage.

A few years ago, I should not have ventured on this discussion in a picture-book, intended chiefly for the drawing-room table: but, in the present day, those who were formerly the mere ladies of England are ENGLISHWOMEN, and the sympathies that before were confined to a class of subjects, now embrace the whole interests of the human race. Women may be as beautiful as they please; they may be the flower of Europe, as my countrywomen undoubtedly are—but till they learn to think as well as look, to reason as well as feel, they enjoy only a moiety of our admiration; and the heart of man, palled with their unchanging sweets, turns away to seek an Egeria in caves and woods, in clouds and dreams.

### CHAPTER III.

Newry—Bay of Carlingford—Mourne Mountains—Abyss of the Parricide—Slieve Donard—Creeping Mountain—Druidical Altar—Downpatrick—Reward of Treason—Danish Fort—Saint Patrick's Well—Ceremonial of the Struel Pilgrimage—Extraordinary Delusion—Traditional Origin of the Sacred Well—Strangford Lough—Grey Abbey—Settlement of Ulster—Condition of the People.

IN Newry there are some handsome edifices, chiefly ecclesiastical; but the only remains of its ancient and magnificent Cistercian abbey are absorbed in the line of one of the streets. This town, however, is so short a distance from some of the finest scenery in Ireland, that the traveller in search of the picturesque regards it only as a starting point. The valley of the Newry Water is, in some respects, the most pleasing in Ireland; and I hardly know any excursion which an artist might make more profitably than by this avenue to Rostrevor and Carlingford, on the shores of the Bay. The elegant country-houses, however, which are seen, every here and there interrupt, in some measure, the



effect; and the loneliness of Rostrevor, which in other circumstances would be almost sublime, puts one in mind too much of Patrician retirement.

The bay of Carlingford is perhaps only second in Ireland in point of beauty to that of Glengariff. The little town itself, situated on the frontiers of the Pale, was at one time a town of fortresses; and there are still the remains of at least three very interesting specimens. The principal of these, King John's castle, stands on a rock which overhangs the sea, and commands a splendid view of the bay, including the deliciously situated village of Rostrevor, on the opposite shore, with Slieve Donard looking over the Mourne mountains behind. The water presents the appearance of a lake, not too extensive to afford full effect to the majestic forms of the land around it, which exhibit almost every variety of heath, rock, and wood. The little old town of Carlingford is at present chiefly supported by its trade in oysters, which enjoy a great reputation; and there is but small chance of its ever desecrating the scene by *degenerating* into the vulgarities of a shipping port. The bay indeed is five miles broad, by about the same in length, and the water is deep enough to float a man of war; but nature has defended the entrance with a barrier of sunken rocks, which render the navigation too difficult to answer completely the purposes of commerce.

The moral inquirer who traverses Ireland for the

purpose of observing the change operated in the social condition of the people, either by manufactures or by the mixture of races, will do well to return from Rostrevor to Newry, and proceed along the great road to Belfast. The pilgrim of external nature, on the other hand, who looks at human beings as if they were merely the adjuncts of a picture, will not suffer himself to be diverted by any circumstances from pursuing the line of the sea coast. To this latter class I assume to belong on the present occasion ; and I must, therefore, beg the reader to accompany me in a ramble among the Mourne mountains.

The road to Newcastle—a distance of about twenty miles, exhibits almost every variety of the wild, the dreary, the majestic, and the picturesque. As we begin to approach this village more especially, and the Mourne mountains, on the left, present steeps absolutely terrific to the imagination, while our lowly path overhangs the sea on the right, which, even in calm weather, rolls with a hollow roar against the rocks below, there are some points of view where the scene partakes indisputably of the character of the sublime. Newcastle itself is finely situated on the brink of the sea, with the loftiest of the Mourne mountains in its immediate neighbourhood. As is frequently the case on such bold coasts as this, there are several objects near the village well worthy of a visit, such as natural shafts, tunnels, and caves. Of these, perhaps

the most remarkable is, a pit on the brow of a neighbouring hill, which, besides the effect it has *per se* on the imagination, is known to possess a subterranean communication with the sea. The moral associations of the spot deepen a thousand fold, its natural horrors. Into this abyss, in the last generation, an aged man was plunged by his own son. The parricide, doubtless, thought that the gulf was too deep and dark for the cry of blood to rise against him from the bottom ; but nature refused to keep the horrible secret, and the body, issuing by some mystic avenue into the ocean, was found soon after at St. John's Point.

The loftiest portion of this mountainous range, which extends from Rostrevor to Newcastle, is Slieve Donard, ascending to a perpendicular height of nearly three thousand feet. The walk to the summit of this pinnacle is four miles in length, which will afford materials for calculating its steepness. Its northern side, more especially after heavy rains, is decorated in almost its whole descent with cascades of water bounding down the rocks, or collected here and there into small ponds : but in winter the beauty of this picture is changed into terror, for the wandering and variegated stream is then a mighty flood that awes the traveller with its impetuosity, and deafens him with its roar. The mountain is of a circular form, and wooded here and there only with hazel, holly, and other small trees. If ever the giants of the forest reigned in

this spot at all, they must have fled with the Fin-galian heroes ; for the poet may now exclaim, with still more literal meaning than in the days of Rokeby :

“ O Clandeboy, thy friendly floor  
Slieve Donard’s oak shall light no more !”

On the summit are several rude chambers formed of loose stones, which were used as chapels and stations for the votaries of St. Donard, who is supposed to have inhabited a cell on the spot in the fifth century.

A deep and secluded valley, which, but for its beauty, would be called a ravine, separates Slieve Donard from the Creeping Mountain. The valley is watered by a stream, over which hangs an enormous rock, hoary and haggard, with a waterfall bursting over its brow. It is by the side of this fall the traveller begins to climb, by a narrow avenue, to the summit of the rock : first gazing into a cavern that yawns close by, and starting as strange voices scream in his ear, though these are discovered, by little gleams of light breaking in by distant crevices, to proceed only from owls and other solitary birds, sailing spectre-like through the gloom. On the summit of the rock, the adventurer finds himself standing in an almost circular area of several acres, round which, or rather to the north, east, and west, the mountain

rises to its remaining height, like some stupendous wall. On one side is the majestic cone of Slieve Donard, on the other Slieve Bringan, with its crown of rocks, and in front, the limitless sea, specked with the Isle of Man.

The road from Newcastle to Dundrum is rendered interesting to those who can appreciate such relics of antiquity, by a Druidical altar of extraordinary size. It consists of a tabular stone, ten yards in circumference, resting upon three supporters, four feet high. Near the altar is a circle of stones, disposed like pillars, with an entrance way distinguished by the larger size of the side stones. Such altars are never horizontal. They are inclined on one side, where a pit is usually found dug in the earth below. This arrangement is supposed to strengthen the suspicion that blood offerings were sacrificed on these tables.

Pursuing the coast route, we pass Killough, and Ardglass. The latter is distinguished by the remains of several castles, and fortified warehouses, as they are supposed to have been, where English and Scottish merchants secured their goods from the depredations of the native chiefs.

Seven miles from Killough is the ancient town of Downpatrick, seated in the midst of an amphitheatre of hills. Here, according to tradition, lies the dust of the patron saint of Ireland, in the burying-ground of the cathedral, whose venerable ruins still overlook the town. But this burying-

ground is famous for something more authentic. While the chivalrous De Courcey, previously Lord Justice of Ireland, under Cœur de Lion—but, at the time I speak of, denounced as a traitor by King John, and a price set upon his head—was performing penance in the cemetery by walking bare-footed round it, his servants, bought over by the enemy, attacked, and at length succeeded in overpowering him. Their service was well rewarded. They were put into a vessel to take them to England, properly victualled for the voyage, but without pilot or crew, and desired, on pain of death, never again to set foot in Ireland. The passport granted them to the favour of the English was sealed, and directed to remain so till actually wanted. It ran as follows: “I, Hugh de Lacy, Lord Justice of Ireland, servant of my dread sovereign lord King John, to all that shall read these letters greeting:—Know ye that these men, whose names are underwritten, served some time Sir John de Courcey, late Earl of Ulster, but now in durance in the Tower of London, and for a sum of money betrayed their master into my hands; I deem them no better than Judas the traitor. How hardly soever I have conceived of De Courcey, I hold them a thousand times more damnable traitors; wherefore let no subject within the king’s dominions give them any entertainment, but spit in their faces, and suffer them to rogue about, and wander like Jews.” The bearers of this recommendation, unfortunately for

themselves, had no occasion to make use of it; for, being unacquainted with the management of a vessel, they were blown back again to Ireland, and, entering the harbour of Cork, were immediately apprehended for the breach of the lord justice's commands, and hanged forthwith.

Near Downpatrick is a large and pretty entire specimen of what is commonly called a Danish fort, or Rath. The traveller who knows nothing of such matters, will sometimes be surprised at the interest excited among antiquarians by what appears to be a little piece of rising ground, with linear heights or hollows near it. On the continent, in like manner, he will sometimes wander through a *Roman camp*, without having received any impression upon his mind, but that arising from the inequalities of the path. In Ireland, however, these works of comparatively remote antiquity are preserved from total obliteration by the superstitions of the people; and not seldom even the uninformed passer-by is struck by the appearance of warlike design in the ditches and earthen ramparts that inclose the mound or central area. Some are destitute of these defences, and are supposed to have been places of interment; but all are now peopled, in the imagination of the peasantry, with fairies or evil spirits, and a plough rarely enters within the enchanted circle.

The ruined abbeys of Inch and Saul are both worth a visit, being only a short walk from Down-

patrick ; but, if the traveller arrive about Midsummer (which was not my good fortune), he must at all events betake himself to the holy hill of Struel. The plain at the foot of the hill is watered by a stream proceeding from St. Patrick's Well, in former times the well of a monastery built by St. Patrick and St. Bridget. The stream in its course forms or feeds several pools, which are covered over with little buildings. To this place every Midsummer resort crowds of devotees, not only from other parts of Ireland, but also, it is said, from France and Spain ; and the reader doubtless will be well pleased with the following account of the ceremonial, made up by Mr. Hardy, from an article in a magazine formerly published at Belfast.\*

“The penitents all proceed, in the first instance, to Downpatrick, where each procures a portion of holy soil from the grave of the patron saint of Ireland. This grave is said to be distinguished from all the surrounding burying-ground, by its never giving birth to a single weed, nor to any other herbs than grass and shamrock. From this place, having procured a handful of sacred earth, they proceed to some house in the town where masses are said every day during the week, from morning till night ; and, after a short delay, set off for Struel.

\* Mr. Hardy's work, the “Northern Tourist,” now out of print, is interesting and amusing in no common degree.



The penance begins at the foot of the hill, which they climb on their bare and bleeding knees by a steep and stony path, originally intended as an emblem of the way that leadeth to eternal life. A few, whose sins are of a milder cast, may run up this path barefoot ; but those who have been guilty of black and grievous offences, besides crawling on their knees, must carry a large rough stone, with their hands placed on the back of their necks. When they reach the top of the hill they run down at a quick trot by the other side, and, returning to the narrow path, ascend as before. This they repeat three, seven, nine, or twelve times, or even a much greater number, according to the nature of their transgressions. The more respectable among them keep their reckoning by beads, while the poorer sort lift a pebble to mark each ascent. After having thus completed their rounds, they are next turned in what is called St. Patrick's chair. This is a kind of chair formed of four rocks, so placed, apparently by nature, that three of them serve as a back and sides, and the remaining one as a bottom to the seat. It stands about the middle of the mountain, at a short distance from the narrow path. Each penitent takes a seat in this chair, and is turned in it thrice, by a person who acts as superintendant of this part of the ceremony, and receives a penny from each for his trouble. He resides in the county of Mayo, whence he comes every year, and, like most of the peasantry of that part of the

country, speaks the purest dialect of the ancient Irish. He boasts of the office having been in his family ever since the days of St. Patrick, and accordingly is well versed in the legends of the place, which he takes great pleasure in communicating to strangers.

“When this part of the ceremony is ended, the penitents descend into the plain, where they move round certain cairns of stones, some crawling, some running, as before. Each individual, however, must carry a stone, which he adds to the heap. These cairns are in groups of seven and twelve, which respectively denote the days of the week, and the months of the year, or, as some will have it, the seven churches and the twelve apostles. Around these they go seven times, or seven times seven, and twelve, or twelve times twelve—measured, as before, by their various degrees of criminality. The next part of the ceremony is to proceed to the large well, the body well, or, by some, the well of sins. Before entering it, however, they approach with profound reverence a flag of freestone, which is placed on the wall, and is possessed of some peculiarly sanctifying powers. This they touch with their fingers, and then cross themselves repeatedly, and thus become prepared for the purifications of the holy wells. If they can afford a few pence of admission money, they may enter the larger well, where they have a room to undress; if not, they must content themselves with the second, or limb

well, into which they are admitted, free of expense, being obliged, however, to strip themselves in the adjoining fields. All modesty is here thrown aside. As they approach the well, they throw off even their under garments, and, with more than Lacedemonian indifference, before the assembled multitudes, they go forward in a state of absolute nudity, plunge in, and bathe promiscuously. After such immersion, they go through the ceremony of washing their eyes, and conclude all by drinking from the fourth well, called by some the well of forgetfulness, and by others the water of life.

“Thus end the ceremonies of the day. Those of the evening follow, and form a remarkable contrast. The employments of the day seem to be considered as the labours of virtue, those of the evening are her rewards, by which they are amply compensated. Their eyes, after having been bathed in the sacred stream, instantly discover the flowery path of pleasure, which conducts them to the tents prepared for their reception, where they are supplied with copious draughts, of which the water of life is but a faint emblem. In those tents, and in the adjoining fields, under the canopy of a pure sky, they spend the whole night, quaffing the soul-inspiring beverage, and indulging in various gratifications to which the time and place are favourable ; for it is understood that, while the jubilee continues, and as long as the happy multitudes remain on the sacred ground, they cannot contract new guilt !”

This melancholy picture might be supposed, at first sight, to apply only to a people in the very lowest stage of civilization ; but, in fact, superstition, even in its grossest form, is not inconsistent with a certain degree of advancement in the social scale. Such absurdities as these are not a part of the Catholic religion—they are excrescences and abuses, and are as much ridiculed, or deprecated, by the well-informed portion of the Catholic population as by the Protestants. In education alone consists the difference between the two classes of the devout. Were the Irish peasantry as well educated—so far as regards useful knowledge—as the Scottish, even if they remained Catholics, there would be nothing disgraceful to human reason in their Catholicism. But the most curious fact concerning the Struel well is to come. The holy waters were accustomed to rise, and overflow, exactly at twelve o'clock, every Midsummer eve ; and to this *miracle*, managed by the very simple machinery of sods removeable at pleasure—the multitude looked as to the seal of their covenant. A gentleman of Belfast, however, presumed one year to prevent the manifestation from heaven, by boring a hole in the embankment, and thus allowing the water to escape. The result was, that on the succeeding year there were comparatively few pilgrims ; but, in the year after, the number was as great as if nothing had occurred to disturb their faith !

“ Concerning the institution of these ceremonies

history is silent. Some of them are evidently of Christian origin, while others have a resemblance to Pagan customs, many of which had been early adopted as improvements in the practices of the Christian church. The precise period when Struel acquired its wonderful qualities is not found in any written record, nor on any coin, or any inscription. But the Connaught peasant, who presides over the ceremonies of the chair, supplies this blank in history by the following account of their origin. Our renowned saint, after his arrival in this part of Ireland, was endeavouring to convert an old worthy of the name of Mac Dhu. One day, as they were walking through the plain now called Struel, on their way from Ardglass, the chieftain's residence, to the monastery of Saul, Mac Dhu was so powerfully moved by St. Patrick's arguments in favour of Christianity, that he at length consented that he himself, and all his family should be baptized, if the saint could at that moment miraculously procure a supply of water. No river then passed through these places. St. Patrick immediately struck him upon the foot with a white rod which he usually carried, which bound him firmly to the spot where he stood. At length, however, the rod being lifted up, he walked forward; but a stream of blood flowed from his foot. The blood, after running a short distance, was changed by the saint's command into a stream of water, which has never since ceased to flow. The

chieftain and all his followers professed their faith in Christianity. The plain and mountain, together with a considerable tract of the adjoining country, were given up by Mac Dhu for the use of the brethren of Saul, and consecrated by the saint. The whole tract of land was named from the river Struile, being a corrupted compound of two Irish words *struth fuile*, or *folá*, signifying a stream of blood.

“In the year 1828 an effort was again made to put a stop to these ceremonies, which for a time succeeded, but they have since been carried on with all their former vigour.”

From Downpatrick the traveller may go to Belfast by the coach, or proceed, loiteringly, on the bosom, or the banks of Strangford Lough, on the south-eastern branch of which the former town stands. The lough is an irregular sheet of water, twenty miles long, and seven broad, communicating with the sea by an inlet, called the Bay of Strangford, about seven miles long, and one in breadth. It is dotted with islands—to the number of fifty-four, some inhabited by men, some by cattle, and some by rabbits, but the greater part altogether desert. Towards the Belfast end of the lake are Newtownards and Grey Abbey, both worth seeing, but especially the latter, as well on account of the ruins of its celebrated abbey, as of the rich and variegated beauty of the scenery. There is an

account given in the Montgomery MSS. of the effects of the settlement of Ulster, in this part of the province, by which (if true) it would appear, that the benefits derived by the country from this great measure must have been so instantaneous as to partake of the miraculous.

“ In the spring time, 1606,” say the MSS., “ these parishes were now more wasted than America (when the Spaniards landed there), but were not at all encumbered with great woods, to be felled and grubbed, to the discouragement or hindrance of the inhabitants ; for in all those parishes aforesaid thirty cabins could not be found, nor any stone walls, but ruined roofless churches, and a few vaults at Greyabbey, and a stump of an old castle at Newtown, in each of which some gentlemen sheltered themselves at their first coming over. But Sir Hugh, in the said spring, brought with him divers artificers, as smiths, masons, carpenters, &c. They soon made cottages and booths for themselves, because sods, and saplings of ashes, alders, and birch trees (above thirty years old), with rushes for thatch, and bushes for wattles, were at hand. And also they made a shelter of the said stump of the castle for Sir Hugh, whose residence was mostly there, as in the centre of being supplied with necessities from Belfast (but six miles thence), who therefore came and set up a market in Newtown, for profit for both the towns. As likewise in the summer season (twice, sometimes thrice, every week)

they were supplied from Scotland, as Donaghadee was oftener because but three hours' sail from Portpatrick, where they bespoke provisions and necessities to lade in, to be brought over by their own or that town's boats, whenever wind and weather served them, for there was a constant flux of passengers coming daily over. . . . 1607, you might see streets and tenements regularly set out, and houses rising out of the ground, as it were, like Cadmus's colony, on a sudden, so that these dwellings became towns immediately. Yet among all this care and indefatigable industry for their families, a place of God's honour to dwell in was not forgotten or neglected; for indeed our forefathers were more pious than ourselves; and so soon as said stump of the old castle was so repaired (as it was in the spring time, 1606), as might be shelter for the year's summer and harvest, for Sir Hugh and his servants that winter, his piety made some good store of provisions in those fair seasons towards roofing and fitting the chancel of that church for the worship of God; and therein he needeth not withdraw his own planters from working for themselves, because there were Irish Gibeonites and Garrons enough in his woods to hew and draw timber for his sanctuary; and the general free contribution of the planters, some with money, others with handicrafts, and many with labouring, was so great and willingly given that the next year after this, before winter, it was made decently ser-



viceable, and Sir Hugh had brought over at first two or three chaplains with him for these parishes. In summer, 1608, some of the priory walls were roofed and fitted for his lady and children, and servants, which were many, to live in. Now every body minded their trades, and the plough and the spade, building and setting fruit-trees, &c. in orchards and gardens, and by ditching in their grounds: the old women spun, and the young girls plied their nimble fingers at knitting—and every body was innocently busy. Now the golden peaceable age renewed no strife, contention, querulous lawyers, or Scottish or Irish feuds between clans and families, and surnames, disturbing the tranquillity of those times, and the towns and temples were erected, with other great works done even in troublesome years.

“He (Sir Hugh, the first Viscount Montgomery) sent over to Donaghadee (by the understanding Irish then called Doun-da-ghee, i. e. the mount, or burial-place of the two worthies or heroes) before him some hewn freestone, timber, and iron, &c., of which he caused to be built a low stone-walled house, for his reception and lodging when he came from or went to Scotland. Mariners, tradesmen, and others had made shelter for themselves before this time, but the viscount’s was the first stone dwelling-house in all the parish. . . . He also wholly repaired the church of Grayabbey.”

During the ten miles of road between New-

towards and Belfast, the traveller from the south will have ample opportunity to moralize on the change now so perceptible in the character and condition of the people. The rags, filth, and mud hovels of the south, which, while they awakened his compassion, alloyed it with disgust and contempt, are here replaced, not only by seats and villas, which are no test of general prosperity, but also by what is far more pleasing to the eye, and satisfactory to the mind—comfortable farm houses, snug cottages, and a well-clad, respectable-looking peasantry.

“This is only natural,” remarks one reader, “it is the effect of *employment* ; for we are approaching the Irish capital of the useful arts.” “It is the effect of the change of races,” maintains another ; “for the preponderating mass of the population are descendants of the prudent and industrious Scots.” Both are right, and yet both are wrong. The Settlers of James I. occupied the country, as conquerors usually do, making the natives slaves or outlaws, and propitiating, as far as possible, their own followers. Had these followers been treated like the natives, the Scots would have degenerated into what were contumeliously termed “the mere Irish.” As it was, they preserved the habits of their own nation, and, by means of neighbourhood and intermarriage, elevated gradually the character of their adopted country. It is not the effects of the difference of blood which we see, but of the differ-

ence of social condition. In our day any thing can be made of the “mere Irish;” but to expect a sudden regeneration by merely pouring in employment, is to shut our eyes upon all history. Employment, indeed, must be given; but the mendicant and vagabond habits of the people must at the same time be corrected by the operation of a poor law. At the same time, also, political agitations must be put down, and the fetters of superstition relaxed or broken. These objects can be accomplished *only* by EDUCATION. The man who talks of force or persecution, should be sent back to the first form at school, and set to read the experience of mankind anew.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Belfast—Character of the People—Religio-political Dissensions—  
Other indications—Belfast Lough—Carriekfergus—Account of M.  
Thurot, the French invader—Description of the Castle.

BELFAST is reckoned the third town in Ireland ; but, in a moral point of view, it is the first. Dublin and Cork are great cities—but they are strictly Irish cities ; while Belfast, if transported, with its whole population, to England, would be reckoned a credit to the country. Its intellectual character I consider decidedly higher than that of an English manufacturing town of the same importance ; while its buildings, if they do not pretend to the exhibition of taste, are at least, to outward appearance, the abodes of ease and wealth.

The streets, generally speaking, are wide and well aired ; and the houses by which they are lined clean and respectable, although built of unstuccoed

brick, as plain as a bandbox. The suburbs, inhabited by "the hewers of wood and drawers of water" to the easier classes, have nothing of that filth and misery which are almost an unfailing characteristic of an Irish town. Every thing in and around Belfast proclaims that it is the abiding place of a shrewd and intelligent population, devoted to worldly gain, and far from being unsuccessful in its pursuit.

This, of course, is a general picture ; for a town which has more than doubled its numbers three times within the last seventy years, must draw constant supplies of population from the country ; and to correct the habitual imprudence, and want of neatness, observable in the Irish peasant, must be a work of time. A considerable number of the masters, however, now provide their workmen with lodgings ; and some of these establishments are clean and wholesome, and extremely neat.

It need hardly be said that the peasantry are not improved in morals by their transplantation from comparative solitude into a crowd ; but it is agreeable to know that a steadily progressing improvement in this particular is now going on. One of the surest tests of the extent of this improvement is the flourishing state of the Savings' Bank. The gentleman who conducts the establishment informed me that he could trace clearly, by his books, a gradual yet rapid amelioration in the character

of the people, and more especially in that of the females.

In the midst of all their business, the upper classes of Belfast have time to quarrel with each other as fiercely—but without the shillela—as if they were at Donnybrook fair. But what they quarrel about I cannot tell. To say that it is religion—at least the *Christian* religion, would be a manifest absurdity; and yet it somehow or other happens that the belligerents always belong to a different communion. No analogy taken from the position of the Church and the Dissenters in England can give the faintest idea of the motives of social warfare in Ireland. Religion and politics, no doubt, are the foundation; but as, in chemistry, two substances may produce a third, totally different in its properties from both, so religion and politics are the parents of an Irish *something*, which is altogether destitute both of piety and common sense. This something is only known in its effects—which are a true monomania. When the morbid chord is touched, there is no pitch of insanity too wild, no depth of idiocy too humiliating, for the unhappy patient. I have frequently spoken with men in this condition, who were otherwise shrewd and intelligent, but whose conversation filled me at once with shame and compassion.

In Belfast such dissensions are nearly confined to the upper classes, or small minority of the population; and the parties being nearly balanced in

numbers, the contest is the fiercer. As for the lower classes, Catholic and Protestant are mingled in the same manufactory, and no difference is observable ; although an intelligent and accomplished Protestant gentleman told me he would *prefer* Catholic workmen. When the people get drunk, they, of course, quarrel and fight as usual ; and on these occasions religion is sometimes made use of as a party word.

I found the theatre, in external appearance, a miserable looking house, not different from the others in the same street, except by its desolate appearance. This is one indication of character. Another appears in the shape of a handsome silver snuff-box in the Commercial Hotel ; an inscription on which bears that it was presented to the civil, active, and intelligent waiter—whose name, by the same token, is James Prey—by the gentlemen frequenting the house, *as a token of respect*.

The town stands on low ground ; it has no public buildings worth notice ; and the inhabitants, except when labouring under the monomania I have alluded to, are respectable discreet persons. Such, however, was not always the character of Belfast. A rude castle, dominating a village on the brink of a ford, was the origin of the present collection of commonplaces in brick ; and the ancestors of the quiet, steady men of business of to-day were the Scottish Presbyterians of the

seventeenth century—a bold, crafty, and religious race, who crossed the channel, to their promised land, with a sword in one hand and a bible in the other. The settlement of Ulster, the reader knows, was determined on by James I., as a means of colonising half a million of acres, forfeited in consequence of the rebellion of Tyrone and Tyrconnel, and afterwards of Sir Cahir O'Doherty. The Irish fled before these ruthless men, who possessed themselves of the fertile parts of the country, leaving to such of the natives as they did not massacre the mountain fastnesses, and other unproductive portions of the soil. This arrangement has continued to the present day; and I have no doubt that it serves to strengthen our prejudices against the Catholics, who in general appear to be worse off than the Protestants—a circumstance which is set down to their professing a different form of the Christian religion.

Upon the whole, Belfast is not a place which can delay long the steps of him who travels in search of the picturesque, either in nature, or human character; and, after a very brief sojourn, I pursued my route northward.

The ride along the shores of Belfast Lough is extremely agreeable. The sheet of water is beautiful, and so are the gently swelling hills by which it is bound in. Carrickfergus is niched in an angle of land, which seems to form the northern limits of







the Lough, although this is in reality farther on ; and the castle, of which a view is annexed, stands upon a rock projecting into the sea.

Carriekfergus, notwithstanding its fine situation, is a poor and dirty town, and swarms with beggars. The castle is of considerable antiquity, and has its due share of interest in Irish history. It was here King William landed, when he came, like one of the knightly princes of an earlier age, to fight out his quarrel with King James. Long before, it had been the landing place of Edward Bruce ; and long after, of M. Thurot, who, with a small force of three frigates and six hundred men, entered the Bay of Carriekfergus to attempt the conquest of Ireland for the French. M. Thurot was a very extraordinary man in his way ; and perhaps the reader will not be displeased to have before him the following brief notice of his life, taken from the Annual Register for 1760.

“ He was born in Boulogne. His paternal grandfather, Captain Farrell, was a native of Ireland, and an officer in the army of James II. With that monarch he fled to France, where he died. His widow survived but a very short time, during which she gave birth to a son in Boulogne, who was left to the care of her family, and went by the name of Thurot. Remaining in Boulogne many years, he became acquainted with one Farrel, an Irish smuggler, who claimed relationship with him. His son (afterwards commodore Thurot) who was

then about fifteen years of age, embarked with Farrell for Limerick ; but stopping at the Isle of Man, a dispute took place between them, and young Thurot hired himself to a gentleman of Anglesea. This person was an experienced smuggler, and had several vessels in the trade, in one of which Thurot sometimes went. Upon one occasion he was sent to Carlingford, where he remained almost a year, to manage some business of importance. At Carlingford he acquired a tolerable knowledge of the English language ; and, instead of returning to his master set off for Dublin, with only a few shillings in his pocket. There he entered into the service of Lord B——, with whom he lived nearly two years, under the name of Dauphine. He next entered into the service of the Earl of Antrim, and went with the family to Glenarm, where, falling in with some smugglers, he joined them, and made several trips between Ireland and Scotland. Having acquired some money, he proceeded to Edinburgh, where he became acquainted with a Mr. V—— ; and was for some time master of one of his sloops, called the *Annie*, which traded to London. From 1743 till 1752 he traded between England and France ; and chiefly to Boulogne, where at last he was arrested as a smuggler. Having remained for some time in prison at Dunkirk, he was transmitted to Paris, where he underwent an examination as to the most effectual means of checking the contraband trade. Through

the interest of M. Tallard, the son of his godmother, he not only obtained his liberty, but also the command of a sloop of war; and in 1759, owing to his knowledge of the channel, was selected to command the squadron which was sent to Ireland. This squadron was eventually captured off the Isle of Man, and Thurot killed in the action."

Being accidentally prevented from delivering an introduction to Mr. M'Skimin, the author of a History of Carrickfergus, I shall so far make use of that gentleman, as to describe the castle in his own words.

"Towards the town are two towers, called from their shape half moons, and between these is the only entrance, which is defended by a strait passage, with embrasures for fire-arms. About the centre of this passage was formerly a drawbridge; a part of the barbican that protected the bridge can still be seen. A dam west of the castle, is believed to have been originally made to supply the ditch at this entrance with water. Between the half moons is a strong gate, above which is a machicolation, or aperture, for letting stones, melted lead, or the like, fall on the assailants. Inside this gate is a portcullis, and an aperture for the like purpose as that just mentioned; the arches on each side of this aperture are of the gothic kind, and the only ones observed about the building. In the gun room of these towers are a few pieces of light ordnance. A window in the east tower, inside, is ornamented

with round pillars ; the columns are five feet high, including base and capital, and five inches and a half in diameter. The centre column seems to be a rude attempt at the Ionic ; the flank columns have the leaves of the Corinthian ; their bases consist of two toruses. Within the gates is the lower yard, or balium ; on the right are the guard room and a barrack ; the latter was built in 1802. Opposite these are large vaults, said to be bomb proof, over which are a few neat apartments occupied by the officers of the garrison, ordnance storekeeper, and master gunner. A little southward are the armourer's forge and a furnace for heating shot ; near which, on the outer wall of the castle, is a small projecting tower, called the lion's den.

“Southward, on the right, is the passage into the inner yard or upper balium, by a gate with a semi-circular arch, above which is a long aperture, circular at the top. Inside, this aperture opens considerably ; and, on each side, are niches in the wall, apparently to protect those who defended the gate—northward of which are several similar apertures, and on the south, a square tower, near which is a small door, or sally-port, with semicircular arch, and ornamented. The openings above this gate, and in the wall, appear to have been originally intended for the discharging of arrows ; the top of the wall overhead seems to have been formerly garrated for a like purpose.

“Within this yard, which is encompassed by a

high wall, is a small magazine, built a few years since, several store-houses, and the keep, or donjon, a square tower ninety feet high. Both the south and east sides of this tower face the inner yard, its west wall forming a part of the outside building : its north wall faces the outer yard. The walls of the keep are eight feet ten inches thick ; the entrance is on the east by a semicircular door in the second story. On the left of the entrance is a small door, now built up, by which was formerly a passage in the south-east corner, by helical stone stairs, to the ground floor and top of the tower. In this passage were loop-holes for the admission of air and light ; and opposite each story a small door that opened into the different apartments. At present the ascent to the top is partly by wooden stairs inside. The ground story of the keep is bomb proof, with small slits looking into the inner yard. It is believed to have been anciently a state prison, and is now the principal magazine in this garrison. Several rooms in the other stories are occupied as an armoury, and for other military stores. On the top of the tower are two small houses ; that on the south-east corner covers the mouth of the passage ; the other, on the south-west corner, seems to have been intended for a sentinel.

“The tower is divided into five stories: the largest room was formerly in the third story, with semicircular windows. It was called Fergus’s dining-room, and was twenty-five feet ten inches

high, forty feet long, and thirty-eight broad. Within the keep was formerly a draw-well, thirty-seven feet deep, the water of which was anciently celebrated for medicinal purposes. This well is now nearly filled up with rubbish."



## CHAPTER V.

Larne—Island Magee—The Gobbins—Superstitions of the People—Witches—Fairies—Brownies—Banshee—Wraiths—Warning Signs—Evil Eye—Superstitions relating to the Daily Occupations—Priests and Ministers—The Dead—A pious Traveller—Road to Glenarm—The Castle—The Bay—Road to Cushendall—Vale of Glenariff—Traits of Character.

PURSUING the road from Carrickfergus to Larne, it soon was lost among precipitous hills, which rose around in the wildest confusion. The road carried straight on over them all; and the driver invariably walked his horses up the steep, and galloped at full speed down. During daylight this was not unpleasant; but when it darkened by degrees, till little was seen distinctly except the coast lights on the island Magee, I felt a little queer, in thus plunging helter skelter into an abyss of which I knew not the nature or termination. Frequently I was startled by a wild cry from a peasant, as he sprang out of the way of the headlong vehicle.

Larne is an uninteresting little town, of about three thousand inhabitants, whose only business is carried on in a bleachfield, and a few flour-mills. It stands, however, in a fine situation, in an angle of the lough of the same name, bounded on the south by the island Magee. On the northern side of the harbour, are the ruins of the castle of Olderfleet, and, farther on, Black Cave Head ; while, in the offing, the Nine Maidens, or Whillan Rocks, and the coast of Scotland in the distance, give variety to the picture.

The island Magee is in reality an isthmus, with the sea on one side, and Larne Lough on the other. There are here the ruins of several churches and castles, and a druidical altar, of itself said to be worth a visit ; but the singular wildness of a portion of the coast-side is the great attraction. The basaltic rocks, called the Gobbins, present a breast-work to the sea, several hundred feet sheer down ; and this stupendous wall is drilled into caverns, formerly the haunt of banditti, and are covered with flocks of sea-fowl.

In 1641, the little peninsula was entirely depopulated by some English and Scottish soldiers from Carrickfergus, who threw the inhabitants, men, women, and children, over the rocks. At present the population is very small, in proportion to the extent of the soil, and of the rude and simple character which might be expected in such a place. The people are extremely superstitious ; and, so late

as 1711, afforded veritable witches, who stood their trial for the crime at Carrickfergus, and were found guilty. Among other freaks attributed to them, were causing the counterpanes of the beds to roll themselves up in the form of a corpse, and instructing a certain bolster to walk into the kitchen with a night-gown about it. The accused, who were industrious, church-going people, were condemned to twelve month's imprisonment, and to stand four times in the pillory. In undergoing the latter part of their sentence, they were severely injured by the mob.

Mr. Mc Skimin gives an account of the superstitions common in this part of the country ; and, as it applies, in a greater or less degree, to the whole of the north of Ireland, I think it well to extract it.

“There exists still a belief in charms, and the powers of witchcraft ; but for the marvellous effects of its power we are commonly referred to a distant period. The received opinion of witches is, that they are old wrinkled hags, who sold themselves to the devil to obtain a part of his occult art, such as taking the milk or butter from their neighbour's cows, or riding through the air on a broomstick. A belief still prevails of the existence of fairies ; and their non-appearance at present is alleged to arise from the general circulation of the Scriptures. Fairies are described as little spirits, who were always clad in green, and inhabited the green mounts called forths. Numerous stories are

told of their being seen at those places, 'dancing on the circling wind' to the music of the common bagpipe. The large hawthorns growing singly in the fields, are deemed sacred to fairies, and are hence called gentle thorns. Some fields east of Carrickfergus were formerly called 'The Fairy Fields.' Brownies, now alleged to be extinct, were another class of the same family. They are described as large, rough, hairy spirits, who lay about the fires after the people went to bed. A warning spirit, in the likeness of an old woman, called Ouna, or the Banshee, is said to have been anciently heard, wailing shortly before the death of any person belonging to certain families. At present this spirit is almost forgotten. Wraiths are still talked of as being seen. These are described as the shadowy likeness of a person appearing a short time before the decease of the real person. Other warnings and appearances are also believed to be death-warnings, such as strange noises, the shadowy likeness of a waving napkin, &c. It is believed that the luck of a cow, or any other animal, may be taken away by a look or glance of the eye of certain people, some of whom are said to be unconscious of their eye having this effect. It is called 'the blink of an evil eye,' and the charm is believed to extend in some instances to children. When this is alleged to occur, the persons are said to be overlooked, or overseen; and it is supposed that the person will not recover, unless some charm is used

to counteract its effects. There is an opinion that certain people are able to take milk from a cow without touching her, or the butter from the milk, letting the milk remain. When churning or making cheese, fire is never suffered to be taken out of the house during the operation. The first time that a cow is milked after calving it is common to put a piece of silver in the bottom of the pail, and to milk upon it. Salt is in daily use with some in a similar way, to prevent witchcraft. Horse-shoes are nailed on the bottom of the churn for a like purpose, and old nails from horse-shoes are sometimes driven in churn-staffs. Certain days are deemed unlucky; few persons will remove to or from a house, or service, on Saturday, or the day of the week on which Christmas is held that year. On New-year's-day, and May-day, fire is rarely permitted to be taken out of houses, lest they loose their luck. Persons going on a journey have often an old man's shoe thrown after them, that they may come speed in the object of their pursuit. Crickets coming to a house are held to bode some change to the family, but are commonly deemed a good omen. A stray dog or cat coming and remaining in a house is deemed a token of good fortune.

“The people who follow the fishing business retain a different class of superstitions, but are not communicative to others on this head. The following have been observed. Meeting certain persons in the morning, especially women, when

bare-footed, is deemed an omen of ill fortune for that day. To name a dog, cat, rat, or pig, while baiting their hook, is surmised to forebode ill luck on that day's fishing. They always spit on the first and last hook they bait, and in the mouth of the first fish taken off the hook or line.

“ Although the people are generally Protestants, yet, if a person is suddenly deranged, or a child overseen, the lower orders rarely apply to their own minister for relief, but to some Roman Catholic priest, and receive from him what is called a priest's book. This book, or paper, is sewed to the clothes of the afflicted person, or worn in an amulet about the neck; if lost, a second book is never given to the same person. It has also been observed, that if a Protestant of any denomination, male or female, is married to a Roman Catholic, the Protestant, three times out of four, becomes a Roman Catholic, and generally a zealous one. The Roman Catholic seldom becomes a Protestant.

“ On the death of a person, the nearest neighbours cease working till the body is interred. Within the house where the deceased is, the dishes, and all other kitchen utensils, are removed from the shelves or dressers; looking-glasses covered or taken down; clocks are stopped, and their dial-plates covered. Except in cases deemed very infectious, the corpse is always kept one night, and sometimes two. This sitting with the corpse is called the wake, from Like-wake (Scottish), the

meeting of the friends before the funeral. These meetings are generally conducted with great decorum; portions of the Scriptures are read, and frequently a prayer is pronounced, and a psalm given out, fitting for the solemn occasion. Pipes and tobacco are always laid out on a table, and spirits and other refreshments are distributed during the night. If a dog or cat passes over the dead body, it is immediately killed, as it is believed that the first person it would pass over afterwards would take the falling sickness. A plate with salt is frequently set on the breast of the corpse, which is said to keep the same from swelling. Salt was originally used in this way as ‘an emblem of the immortal spirit.’ ”

In the little inn at Larne, I found in my bedroom a copy of the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” with this inscription, addressed to the landlady by some pious traveller. “To Mrs. Stewart, from one who earnestly desires that she may be of the number of those, who, being redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, through faith and patience endure unto the end, seeing him who is invisible. August 22nd, 1827, C. C.”

I set out for Glenarm in a storm of rain, which almost completely hid the face of the country. I was now mounted on a small car which carried the mail, and was drawn by a spirited horse, managed by a still more spirited driver. The road was good, and, from the little I could see, extremely

picturesque. On the right the bold headland of Ballygally, a promontory composed of basaltic pillars, is visible almost the whole way, with the ruins of Carne castle near it, on a rock in the sea. On the left, a range of hills, terminating with Knockloo, or the Black Hill, an irregular cone of the character which is usually seen in Wicklow.

The road, as we approached Glenarm, skirted closely along the sea-side; and, from its wall of loose stones, arose here and there picturesque masses of lime-stone rock, resembling at a little distance the ruins of castles. The aspect of the sea from this part of the road was nothing less than sublime. The wind was in shore, and it came in those tempestuous squalls which a sailor describes by saying, "it blows great guns." The waves broke upon the shore in an attitude of majesty which I have rarely observed before; and in those places where the road skirted closely along the rocks, we were repeatedly drenched by clouds of spray.

Glenarm, situated in a nook of the coast, and its white houses dominated by a castle, had what is called a romantic appearance; but, under the circumstances, I was more inclined to explore the interior of the hotel than the flooded street. Next morning the weather was still Irish in the extreme; but at this late season it was impossible to give up anything to the fear of wind or water, and I sallied forth in the midst of the storm, and walked to the top of one of the hills which inclose the valley.



From this place the appearance of the town is extremely picturesque. It is seated at the bottom of a little narrow bay, and extends longitudinally into the valley, with the castle in the midst. This edifice has lately undergone a thorough repair, in a taste which has been severely, and I think unjustly, criticised. It seems to me to retain a great deal of the character of a baronial residence. It is the property of the Antrim family ; and is inhabited at present by Mr. Mc Donnell, who married the Countess of Antrim.

The little town is neatly built, but it is very poor. A salmon fishery gives employment to a good many of its inhabitants in the summer ; but their only other resource is their small portion of land. There is nothing squalid, however, in the appearance either of them or their houses ; although, indeed, the latter are not so uniformly whitewashed as ought to be the case where lime is so plenty.

The bay in which Glenarm is situated is itself embosomed in a much wider one ; of which the extreme northern angle, at the distance of five miles, is Garron Point, a fine headland, extending far out into the sea. The town is built on the right bank of a stream, which waters the castle walls, and falls into the sea.

I set out for Cushendall in the midst of tempestuous gusts of wind, loaded with sharp rain, which told like small shot. The views, notwithstanding, were very fine, with the open sea to the

right, and swelling hills on the left. As we advanced, and especially after passing the village of Cairnelough, the shore scenery became more varied, and the Garron Head, to which we were approaching, by circling round the edge of the sea, assumed a bolder and more picturesque attitude. On passing the Garron Point, near which is the massive rock of Dunmaol, with the traces of a Danish fort on its summit, a still more striking change took place. The basaltic pillars, soon to be more accurately defined as we approach the Causeway, are here seen as if in a rude unfinished state; the hills, without altogether gaining the altitude, assume the physiognomy of mountains; and they descend either sheer down, or in terraced precipices, forming in some places a wall of pillars. As we pass them successively, they assume, when we look back, a grand and imposing aspect; the front, which they present to the sea, being at the top perpendicular, and below jutting outwards like the scarp of a fortress of the middle ages. The road is carried along the shore through every obstacle, a fact which is attested by huge masses of limestone, which occasionally threaten destruction to the traveller. Further on, a limestone rock appears in a grotesque figure, which the imagination may easily invest with a resemblance to humanity. This is called *Clocher Stucken*, and was formerly believed to mark the extreme northern point of Ireland.

A peasant girl on the car repeated a story which

I knew to be current upon the subject, that this was one of the giants who constructed the Causeway, and who were turned into stones for their presumption by the enchantments of the Druidical priesthood. My informant, however, candidly added, looking up in my face with the honest expression of one who would not willingly impose upon a traveller, that she had heard this only at second hand, and therefore could not undertake to say what truth there might be in the statement.

The vale of Glenariff forms a very remarkable break in the scenery. It is inclosed by lofty and picturesque hills, and the stream from which it derives its name falls into the sea at Red Bay. There are here some caverns, in the reddish clay of which the soil is formed, that are not very remarkable, and after this the road runs under an irregular Gothic arch through the soil. One of the caverns served formerly for a school, and was probably more comfortable than such places generally are in the more solitary districts of Ireland. They are sometimes merely sod-hovels, built in the ditch of a highway, whence their name of *hedge-schools*. They are, of course, uninhabitable in winter, and deserted at harvest-time; and the education they afford, therefore, is little more than nominal. Just after emerging, some ruins appear on the steep above, said to be remains of a castle of the Elizabethan age. Cushenahall is neat and well situated; but I found the

inn, which is at the further extremity of the town, very ill provided with the materials for a good dinner, although a *carte* of the wines was affixed in the parlour. If the traveller must rest a night upon his journey, I would recommend him to give the preference to Glenarm.

From a little incident which occurred in the course of the ride, I received rather an unfavourable impression of the manly gallantry extended in this part of the country by the male sex to the other. When protecting myself from the rain during those pauses of the blast when it was possible to hold up an umbrella, I extended the protection, as a matter of course, to the peasant girl alluded to—who happened to be neither pretty nor neatly dressed. She appeared surprised, and, at first overcome with the awkwardness of feeling herself in a new situation ; she said she had never before received such kindness from a *gentleman* ; and, when I explained her mistake, informing her that no man could by possibility be entitled to the name of a gentleman who acted otherwise, her surprise amounted to astonishment. On parting at Cushendall with this girl, who, in addition to the plainness of her features and the penury of her dress, spoke an odious farrago of Scottish and Irish, she turned fully round, and, with more than the grace of a peeress (for nature is more graceful than art), thanked me warmly for my attention.

But another trait must be recorded. When the

storm was at its highest, a young girl darted out of a cottage by the road side, and desired my companion, whom she called Kitty, to give her her cloak *directly*, “and take that”—offering a miserable, threadbare cotton rag. Kitty complied at once; and, when I asked whether the young woman had borrowed her cloak, and if she were her sister—“Oh no!” she replied, “it is only a girl of our village, who is out here visiting a sick friend, and seeing that I am likely to get home much faster than she can travel on foot—not to talk of your umbrella, Sir—she wished me to exchange my warm cloth cloak for her thin cotton one: and that is all fair, you know.” “Would she do as much for you?” demanded I. “’Deed would she,” replied Kitty, with generous warmth, “and more nor that!” The reader may smile at my little details; but it is of such minute touches that is formed the true portraiture of character. Great events occur very rarely; and, when they do occur, the mind rises from its ordinary level to meet them. In extremity of danger, for instance, a man may, and often does, perform a brave action who is naturally and habitually a coward. On the other hand, in the little incidents of every-day life, which come without being noted, we act unconsciously as nature dictates.

## CHAPTER VI.

Cushendall—Remarkable hill—Cushendun—Caverns of Red Bay—Paddy Mackay's kitchen—The Stocking-knitter—Passage of the Carey Mountain—Dinner at a Shebeen—Learning of the Irish peasantry—Ballyeastle—Smuggling anecdote—Knocklead—Cairn of the Three—Black Nun of Bona Margy—Ruined Castles.

CUSHENDALL is situated in a narrow valley, forming a little nook of the coast in Red Bay. It is built partly in the valley, which is watered by a rapid stream, and partly on the steep side of one of the hills which overtop it. This peculiarity of situation gives it an air of romance, as its white houses are seen gleaming through the trees. There is nothing of note, however, in the interior, unless it be a small square tower, intended for a prison. In the morning I climbed the street on the hill, if it be lawful to call that a street which, to all appearance, was the bed of a mountain torrent ; and,

at the summit, enjoyed one of the most extensive views I had seen for a long time of cultivated land, inclosed in an amphitheatre of hills. The most remarkable of these in form, although not in height, which is called Lurgeidan, I had before seen from different points of view, and it always appeared to be a new component part of the picture. It had followed me to the village; and I had seen it from the lower street, shutting in the avenue almost as abruptly as the mountain described in a former volume of this work, as overhanging the High Street of Innsbruck, in the Tyrol. Now it had shifted its position anew, retiring to some distance, and forming a portion of the lofty barrier which I have described as surrounding the granary of Cushendall. From whichever point it was beheld, however, its form remained the same—that of a vast circular mass, rising majestically to a considerable height, and terminating in an almost flat summit, with sides as perpendicular as the walls of a fortress. Had Ovid been an Irishman, he would have sung this hill as one of the metamorphosed comrades of Fingal, who still continued to watch the Druid passes, and haunt the steps of the stranger with menace and suspicion. Among the group of hills, there was one of an almost semi-circular figure, like the broader part of an egg, which formed a remarkable and pleasing object in the chain of rugged and abrupt ridges around it.

Finding that the mail-car was not to set out for

Ballycastle till the afternoon, I engaged the driver to take me up on the road, and walked round by the coast. It was still tempestuous, but fairer than yesterday, and I enjoyed the walk very much to Cushendun. The hills on this side of Red Bay are without the remarkable ridges which distinguish those on the other side; and, as there is hardly a tree on the whole route, I found the landward view rather monotonous. I at length reached the next bay, where a wide valley is divided, about a mile inland, into two, by a broad and lofty hill abutting into the middle. The vistas up these lateral valleys showed that they were cultivated, at least at the bottom, which was also the case with the main valley. Here there were cottages, and groups of houses, thinly scattered; and, near the sea, some white houses, which bear, *par excellence*, the name of Cushendun. Beside these there is a station of the water-guard. The whole of the valley is poor. A little digging, a little fishing, a little smuggling, produce in the whole but a little subsistence. To the right of the bay there is a strange rocky nook, where the sides of the steep are perforated with caverns, that present rather a singular aspect. In front, a huge formless mass stands perfectly isolated; and, farther on, another has the appearance of a wild bridge connecting a rock in the sea with the main land. The largest cavern perforates completely the cliff, which is at this part narrow, and of a grotesquely irregular form. It seems to be



used at present as a store-house ; but the inscriptions and initials cut in the walls testify that it has been visited from curiosity by numerous travellers. I have never had the ambition, or the vanity—whichever be the guiding motive—to wish to immortalize myself by such means ; but fate, as if in recompense of my virtuous humility, has taken care that the letters L. R. are the most conspicuous in the cavern. It was in contemplation to construct a pier at this place, but the project is either abandoned altogether, or indefinitely postponed ; although a practical example of the inconvenience arising from the want of one lay on the shore, in the form of a stranded and damaged fishing-boat.

My paction with the car-driver provided that I was to meet him at a certain Paddy Mackay's, about a mile from this spot ; but, on reaching the trysting place, I found it was yet some hours till the time appointed. The wind had moderated, but the rain increased ; and I resigned myself, with a sigh, to a bench in Paddy Mackay's kitchen. Paddy himself was busy out of doors, and his wife was interested in nothing but her wheel. At length a country girl came in, to deliver a pair of stockings, which she had knitted, and her conversation helped to pass a little more time. She informed me that, if blessed with full employment, it was possible for her to earn twenty pence per week by knitting stockings ; but that women in that part of the

country were to be envied if they made half the money. Spinning produced scarcely anything. Their husbands and brothers, not having sufficient employment at home, went to Scotland and elsewhere in search of something to do. While they were absent, the women did the work of the fields; but this was never known to be the case when a man was at home and unemployed.

The peasants' huts in this valley were in general of a poor description; and yet, in looking into them, I found nothing resembling the bareness and destitution of the south. When the stocking-girl went away, I waited patiently for some time, in expectation of other customers whom I might entrap into conversation: but no one came. The carman had expressly told me that he would not *allow* me to "face" the Carey Mountain without him; but this only piqued my curiosity, and I at length set out to walk at least a part of the way to Ballycastle. The road, forsaking the valley, or the three valleys, climbed the side of a barren hill, covered with gray stones, and this I found was the Carey mountain. Judging by appearances, I should have pronounced it to be quite inaccessible to carriages, but the oral evidence was against me. As I toiled up the desolate path, I became hungry, and began to feel some anxiety as to the distance it might be necessary to walk before reaching a place where this appetite might be gratified. On arriving at the last habitation on the shoulder of the hill, I

was told that I should meet with no other human habitation for six or seven miles; and, as this was a public-house, I determined to stay and dine.

The hostess seemed at first to feel her poverty insulted by being asked for dinner; and answered briefly that the potatoes which I saw smoking before me in an iron pot were all her house afforded. Apparently mollified, however, by the good humour with which I accepted this bill of fare, and by the readiness with which I prepared to draw in my stool to the fire-side, she put on the fire a small portion of salted cod-fish, which eventually, with the aid of melted butter, gave a wonderful flavour to the potatoes. While the cookery was going on, I retired into the inner chamber, the sleeping-room (and I believe the only one) of the family, and sat down at a table to indite these pages. Let me tell you, reader, that salted cod-fish and potatoes are not bad fare for a pedestrian traveller on the Carey Mountain.

A peasant who sat by the fire-side in the kitchen was very learned in Irish history. He told me the number of schools, and even the number of scholars, that were in the island a thousand years before the Christian era. He related, also, the principal Fingalian legends; and talked with admiration of a book called "The Cosmogony of the World." Such is the knowledge possessed by the Irish peasantry, when they possess any knowledge at all. Amidst their store of old-world learning, there is nothing that can be turned

to any useful account. In the scraps of Latin which some of them give forth as something rare and precious, I never heard any maxim conveyed which could tend to the elevation of their character either as men or citizens.

The Carey Mountain rises like an Alp between the habitable parts of the country; and soon after the mail-car overtook me, the road presented as dreary and savage an aspect as any I have travelled in Switzerland. Not a house, not a tree, not a shrub appeared—nothing, as far as the eye could reach, but an expanse of black heath. Near the summit of this dismal mountain, there is a lake, to the right of the road—if one can call, with propriety, such a thing a road. Like the Irishman, who was *carried* in a sedan chair, without top, seat, or bottom, I may say that but for the honour of the thing, I would rather have walked: and, in fact, I did foot it to the very summit, nor was there any possibility of managing otherwise.

A new road has been constructed at considerable labour and expense; but, by what I cannot help thinking a blunder, it has been macadamized in almost its whole length. The consequence is, that the old road, notwithstanding its miserable condition is by far the easier drag of the two, and probably will continue to be so, in this little-frequented route, for twenty or thirty years to come. Since the new road *is* made, however, I would recommend the old one to be shut up instantly, as the only

means of directing the current of traffic to its intended channel.

At the summit of the mountain the view was extremely fine, and would have been still more so, had there remained enough of daylight to see it by. The magnificent mountain of Knocklead was before us a little to the left, with the dull sky appearing to rest heavily upon its head. To the right were the promontory of Fairhead, and the island of Rathlin, with the measureless sea beyond. This was all which the state of the atmosphere enabled me to see distinctly, but, seen from such a spot, the very dimness and mystery of the picture rendered it sublime.

On approaching Ballycastle, I could have imagined myself suddenly transported to some English sea-side retreat for the gay and opulent; but the aristocratic looking houses, in a nook of the bay, which gave me this idea, are only a suburb of the little town. Even in itself, however, Ballycastle is certainly superior to most places of its size in Ireland, although of late years it has greatly fallen off in trade and resources. Mr. Boyd, the proprietor, in his single person, carried on a business—or rather a series of businesses—sufficient for the support of a moderate sized town. His corn-mills, salt-pans, coaleries, breweries, soap-boiling works, &c. &c., all went on at the same moment; and in the harbour, then fully employed, the free trade contributed as much as the fair trade to enrich the

place. All this, or about all, is now over ; and the prospects of this enterprising family have terminated in two deaf and dumb heirs.

The townspeople live like other peasants, occasionally employing themselves in fishing, and occasionally in weaving at home. The Protestants and Catholics are nearly balanced, and no worldly difference is perceptible in the professors of the two forms of Christianity. Before the establishment of the water-guard, smuggling was carried on here on a very extensive scale ; and there can hardly be conceived any thing more inefficient than the revenue system which this replaced. I was told by one of the inhabitants, as a capital joke, that he had landed one day eleven boat loads of rum and tobacco in the open bay, while the four custom-house officers stationed in the place were drinking with his master. In carrying the goods up the street, the smugglers were met by these worthies, reeling home ; who, however, were either too blind to see them, or too helplessly drunk to interfere.

The establishment of the water-guard here, as elsewhere, was attended by one mistake, which, especially on a coast like this, diminished much its efficiency. Instead of employing men who knew the coast, utter strangers were sent from England ; and for some time smuggling went on as before. Lieutenant Seeds, however, the first chief of the guard, was a desperate fellow. He boarded smugglers of the largest class, and used his fire-arms

freely. His fate was deeply tragic. One day a fine American vessel, either not aware of the new coast police, or presuming upon its own giant strength, stood boldly into the bay, and fired two guns either in warning or defiance. Seeds would not be warned, and determined not to be defied with impunity. He got a small smack, manned her with eleven stout fellows, armed with muskets, pistols, and cutlasses, and stood boldly out to sea. The twelfth man belonging to his force was too late to get on board. He had waited for a moment "to dig a few potatoes for his wife," before embarking on the perilous enterprise; and, although the boat had only just left the quay when he reached the spot, Seeds swore that he should not be taken on board, but that the moment he returned he would have him broken. My informant heard the orders given by the lieutenant to his men, which were that they were to lie flat on the deck till they reached their prize, and then fire a volley, and board in the smoke.

Onward bounded the adventurous smack, and in glided the haughty American to meet her. No strife, no struggling, no firing, told of the collision. The smack disappeared from the face of the waters, under her enemy's keel, and the smuggler continued her course into the bay, stately, and alone.

Only one man rose. He was the owner of the smack, whom Seeds had tempted, with a large sum, to lend his vessel, and his personal assistance. He

succeeded in climbing up the chains, but his brains were immediately dashed out with a handspike. This victim's hat was found some time after on the opposite coast of Scotland, with his name inscribed in it. No smuggling of any consequence has taken place in this neighbourhood for the last three years.

Ballycastle should be the tourist's head quarters for some time. For my own part, being under the "curse of the wandering foot," I was unable to remain as long as I could have wished; but the only difference this made was, that I worked the harder while there, and converted into a toil what ought to have been a pleasure. As for mere bodily toil, I do not reckon it a part of the inconvenience, when the traveller is in good health, and not old; but to be compelled to crowd the mind with images, which must be seized and examined one by one, and arranged and classified within a given time, is to throw the present enjoyments of travelling into a reversionary fund. Still, however, this fund is always sure, and, with imaginative men, it bears a good round interest.

A walk to the summit of Knocklead, one of the Aura mountains, close to Ballycastle, was not fatiguing in the true sense of the word. The picture which lay outspread before me, although grand and various, was but a single picture. Its component parts harmonized with each other, and contributed towards the same impression. Seventeen hundred



feet higher in the air than when I set out, I felt as if the elastic and buoyant spirit within had risen in the same proportion. Behind me lay a chain of mountains, and before, the majestic sea, with the hills of Argyle beyond. These, however, are merely words, that may, or may not, call up ideas; but there was something in addition, which is not contained in the nomenclature of landscape painting. It was not the idea of vastness which elevates the merely beautiful to the sublime; it was not the rich and sparkling sunshine in which the whole scene was steeped; it was not the feeling of awe, generated by the loftiness of the spectator's position, which seems to place the whole world at his feet: but it was something produced by the mingling of all these. My seat at this moment was the Cairn of the Three, a tumulus where, according to old tradition, three Danish princesses, after many wanderings and sorrows, found a final resting place.

This mountain is believed by the peasantry to contain in its bosom a reservoir of water, destined one day to rush forth, and inundate the country to the extent of seven miles around. Such was the prophecy of Sheelah Dubhni Malone, the Black Nun of Bona Margy, who formerly resided in the Franciscan abbey of that name, and enjoyed a high reputation for her knowledge of futurity. The ruins of the abbey, which stand near Ballycastle, and which doubtless will continue to do so till the fulfilment of the prophecy, are of considerable

extent. It was among the latest buildings of the kind erected in Ireland; and the remains of its sculpture exhibit some considerable knowledge of the art.

The small fragment of Duninny Castle will also attract the traveller's attention, but only on account of its site, the brink of a precipice, several hundred feet high; as will also, for a similar reason, the single tower which remains of Kenbane Castle, the strong hold of a M'Allister. Another ruin, in the neighbourhood, bearing the odd name of Gobbin's Heir, judging by the stern rudeness of its style, is probably more ancient than either.

## CHAPTER VII.

Bay of Ballycastle—First View of Fairhead—Question of Sublimity—Erroneousness of preconceived notions—Coalerics—Singular Discovery—Perilous position of the Explorers—Summit of the Promontory—Sensations on looking down the Precipice—Remarkable Anecdote—The Grey Man's Path—Secrets of the Mountain—Descent by the Chasm—Natural Ruins at the bottom.

TRAVELLERS usually take a guide from Ballycastle to Fairhead ; but, when fully aware of what is to be seen, I prefer exploring for myself. I accordingly set out to walk to this celebrated promontory by the bay. The Bay of Ballycastle is small, but it certainly is the most remarkable in character I had yet seen in Ireland. At both points it is bounded by a wall of perpendicular cliffs, and in front lies the island of Rathlin, built, as one might suppose, on a regular mass of white rocks.

Fairhead, however, a precipice about six hundred feet high, was the grand attraction ; and thither I directed my steps. Mr. Inglis unwillingly admits, if he admits at all, the sublimity of this object. He is not disposed to confess that

any admixture of awe is produced by an elevation of not more than six hundred feet. This is a great mistake, and arises from a very prosaic calculation, depending more upon the foot-rule than upon the instinctive laws of taste and nature. It must be in the experience of every observer, that when an object reaches the altitude of a few hundred feet, its pretensions to the character of sublimity depend entirely upon its form and aspect. If Fairhead were in the shape of a rounded hill, it might be beautiful but could be nothing more ; but as it is, a naked precipice, rising from a chaos of shapeless rocks, it is sublime. Why do we so often give the name of mountains to elevations that scarcely deserve that of hills ? We do so, unconsciously, from the impressions produced by their form and aspect.

On the opposite page the reader will see the promontory of Fairhead as it exists in reality ; and, if he will only rear it, in imagination, on the iron-bound coast I am attempting to describe, surrounded by the various adjuncts of mountains, wilds, and tumbling waters, he will easily conceive that such an object must partake largely of the sublime.

The traveller, however, expects to see in Fairhead something *more* than the sublime. He expects to see this colossal wall built in the form of a regular colonnade, the pillars close even to touching, and two hundred feet in length. This he will not see. Let him examine the annexed view attentively, and disengage his mind from the impressions





derived from guide-books, and the reports of travellers who make a point of seeing everything therein set down,—and he will then be able to visit Fairhead without risk of disappointment. The columns, it is true, which are very irregular, and therefore unsightly, polygons, may be detected on close examination; and a portion of the summit, bare of turf, presents the appearance of a pavement formed by the heads of the shafts; but this is not apparent to the eye when the object is viewed as a whole; and it, of course, has nothing to do with the effect produced.

While progressing towards the promontory, my attention was attracted by several small openings in the hill, between which and the sea the road is carried. These openings were close by the road, and arched over with cut stone. Although I expected, about this place, to fall upon the well-known coal pits, I could not at first believe that these were their mouths; but such proved to be the fact. One peculiarity attending these shafts is, that instead of descending from the surface of the earth into its bowels, they ascend into the hill from a very trifling elevation above the sea.

The coal-pits are intermixed in a very curious manner with the question relating to the early civilization of Ireland. It actually appears that they were worked with iron tools, or at least tools fortified with iron, at a period far more remote than that which modern writers are willing to assign for the

introduction of scientific knowledge into the island. Mr. Hamilton, in his Letters on the Antrim Coast, believes the period to have been more than a thousand years ago. The account he gives of the discovery of the ancient pits, was repeated to me, in substance, by a man who formerly worked as a collier on the spot. I retail it in the words of Mr. Hamilton.

“About the year 1770, the miners, in pushing forward an adit toward the bed of coal, at an unexplored part of the Ballycastle cliff, unexpectedly broke through the rock into a narrow passage, so much contracted, and choked up with various drippings and deposits on its sides and bottoms, as rendered it impossible for any of the workmen to force through, that they might examine it farther. Two lads were, therefore, made to creep in with candles, for the purpose of exploring this subterranean avenue. They accordingly pressed forward for a considerable time, with much labour and difficulty, and at length entered into an extensive labyrinth branching off into numerous apartments, in the mazes and windings of which they were completely bewildered and lost.

“After various vain attempts to return, their lights were extinguished, their voices became hoarse and exhausted with frequent shouting, and at length, wearied and spiritless, they sat down together in utter despair of an escape from this miserable dungeon. In the mean time the work-



men in the adit became alarmed for their safety ; fresh hands were incessantly employed, and in the course of twenty-four hours the passage was so opened as to admit some of the most active among the miners. But the situation of the two unhappy prisoners, who had sat down together in a very distant chamber of the cavern, prevented them altogether from hearing the noise and shouts of their friends, who thus laboured to assist them. Fortunately it occurred to one of the lads (after his voice had become hoarse with shouting) that the noise of miner's hammers was often heard at considerable distances through the coal works, and in consequence of this reflection he took up a stone which he frequently struck against the sides of the cavern ; the noise of this was at length heard by the workmen, who in their turn adopted a similar artifice ; by this means each party was conducted towards the other, and the unfortunate adventurers extricated time enough to behold the sun risen in full splendour which they had left the morning before just beginning to tinge the eastern horizon.

“ On examining this subterranean wonder, it was found to be a complete gallery, which had been driven forward many hundred yards in the bed of coal ; that it branched off into numerous chambers, where miners had carried on their different works ;\*

\* There were thirty-six of these chambers which were esteemed so valuable as again to be occupied by the workmen who discovered them.

that these chambers were dressed in a workmanlike manner ; that pillars were left at proper intervals to support the roof.

“In short, it was found to be an extensive mine, wrought by a set of people at least as expert in the business as the present generation. Some remains of the tools, and even of the baskets used in the works, were discovered, but in such a decayed state that on being touched they immediately crumbled to pieces. From the remains which were found, there is reason to believe that the people who wrought these collieries anciently, were acquainted with the use of iron, some small pieces of which were found ; it appears as if some of their instruments had been thinly shod with that metal.”

These coal-pits were worked to advantage by Mr. Boyd, of Ballycastle ; but the estate is now in chancery, and a lease cannot be obtained long enough to tempt speculators. One fertile source of employment is thus cut off from the district.

I wandered on ; and, turning up the hill, by the side of a picturesque cascade, at length crossed the stream, and directed my steps towards the summit of Fairhead. Here, of course, the view is the grand attraction. The Scottish coast, hidden when I was below by the island of Rathlin, lay before me to the east ; and to the west extended the whole basaltic range, with its islands and promontories. Rathlin, with its snowy cliffs, in the offing, was peculiarly fine ; and, even from this height, its singular head-

land looked like a separate island. The farther point of the bay, hitherto marked by a perpendicular wall of cliff, now sloped down in a mass of rugged precipices, terminating in a large, shapeless rock in the sea, surrounded by breakers.

It is not difficult, in some places, to approach the brink of the precipice, for the purpose of looking down, as a hold may be taken of the inequalities of the summit; but a nervous man would do well to repress his curiosity. In Switzerland, I have looked down into more than one gulf *several times* this depth, but I never before felt so distinctly the approach of that feeling of mingled awe, fear, exultation, and wild daring, which resembles, if it not actually is—insanity. One cause of this may be the form of the masses of rock below, many of which point upwards, in the shape of towers, and obelisks, and pinnacles, and groups of colossal pillars. The ceaseless tumbling of the sea may be another source of this confusion of mind, and the hollow roar with which it breaks into clouds of white spray among the natural ruins.

Some suppose that the extraordinary mass of ruins below, are portions of the steep which have fallen down in the course of ages; and they affirm that, even within the memory of persons now living, an acre of surface has in this manner been lost to the promontory. Others are of opinion that the supposed debris occupy their original position, but have been isolated from the promontory, and from

each other, by some unknown agent acting vertically.”\* I am inclined myself to suppose them to be fallen ruins; and for this reason, that the sharp angles of the polygons are as nicely fitted to each other as the parts of a tessellated pavement, and that therefore it would not be in the power even of nature herself to separate the columnar masses, without overturning or breaking them to pieces.

The fact of a portion of the precipice which girds this wild shore having given way in our own time, is not disputed; and at Portmoor an occurrence of this kind was signalized by an extraordinary incident. A man, it appears, was in the habit of seating himself on the extreme edge of the precipice, for the purpose of viewing at his leisure the very remarkable scene; and one summer morning he was in the midst of a reverie, in this perilous situation—when the cliff gave way. The detached portion glided, rather than fell, to the bottom of the steep, where it sunk several feet into the earth, and the involuntary traveller was deposited alive, and even unhurt, upon the shore!

There are two small lakes on the summit of Fairhead—and in fact I hardly know the mountain in Ireland which is destitute of this feature. They have the same lonely and desolate appearance I have noticed elsewhere in such situations. But the most interesting portion of the promontory is the Grey Man’s Path; and it is also the most important,

\* Richardson on the Causeway Coast.

inasmuch as it affords a means of access to the world of ruins below.

The Grey Man's Path is a chasm which cuts the headland into two parts; and if the traveller will only venture into a sort of natural door-way, formed of rocks and pillars, and leading, as it might appear, into the subterranean depths of the mountain, he will speedily find the path widen, and be able to descend with little difficulty to the edge of the sea. This course is indispensable to one who would view the secrets of nature, and examine with his own eyes the materials and formation of the mountain. Here he will see, probably for the first time, the basaltic pillars of which he has heard so much: he will observe them disposed in perpendicular groups of various lengths, till by and by they form the entire walls of the abyss, and at the bottom reach an altitude of upwards of two hundred feet.

The basalt of this coast is a ponderous, grey stone, exceedingly close in the grain. Where it is washed by the sea the colour is almost black; but if exposed to the air, as in precipices, brown. Some writers attribute the formation of the substance to water, some to volcanic fire, and some to a conjunction of both; and each of these gentlemen is as well informed on the subject as the others. The pillars at Fairhead are on a much more gigantic scale than elsewhere; one of these forming, it is said, a quadrangular prism, thirty-three feet by thirty-six on the sides, and two hundred feet in length.

On reaching the bottom of the promontory, by the Grey Man's Path, a very singular effect is produced by the waste of ruins in the midst of which the traveller finds himself. The regularity of arrangement observable in the chasm is now no more; but, instead, a chaos appears, of regular forms grouped in the wildest confusion. Seated, with half-shut eyes, on one of these mysterious rocks, I resigned myself for some time to the guidance of imagination; and many a temple, many a dome, many a tower, many a pyramid, many an obelisk, arose before my vision. Awaking, at length, with a start, the picture dissolved into its elements: groups of broken polygons, and shapeless cliffs, piled high over each other, and descending gradually into the sea. The waters, in the meanwhile, rising ever and anon, with a sullen swell in the midst, broke into foam, with a roar which re-echoed wildly up the abyss by which I had descended.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Conversation with a small Farmer—Condition of the people—Landlords—Priests and Parsons—Tithes—True nature of the tax—History of ecclesiastical imposts—Effects of the Reformation—Anglican Church—Dissenters—Catholics—Anglican Church in Ireland—Proposal—Appropriation of tithes to the purpose of education.

WHILE returning along the shore from Fairhead, I observed a man, of more respectable appearance than we usually find in such employments in Ireland, working at a quarry by the road side. I entered into conversation as usual; which I prolonged to a more than usual extent, on finding my companion to be not only intelligent, but trustworthy. A traveller in this country, in fact, must be always on his guard; for even the most stupid of the peasantry are ingenious enough to deceive, when they come in contact with the ignorant or unwary. If the inquirer have not some previous

knowledge of the subject, some established data to go upon, his questions will, in nine cases out of ten, be worse than useless. But if a man will only leave his prejudices behind, as unfit for a traveller's stores, he will find these data by no means of difficult attainment. It is unlikely that every one he meets will be in the same story, and he will soon learn to sift the truth from the falsehood. The tendency, however, to represent matters as still worse than they are, may be said to be universal; although, on the other hand, this tendency is too often neutralized by the fact that matters are as bad as it is possible to represent them. There are few places in the north where the traveller will not hear as dismal accounts as in the worst districts of the south; it is necessary, therefore, that he should not only hear with his own ears, but see with his own eyes.

The man, however, whom I now fell in with belonged to the very small class of those whose communications proceed from an overflowing of the heart. There was nothing uncommon in the information I received from him—nothing with which I was not previously acquainted; but our conversation lasted so long, and turned upon so many points, that I am led insensibly to refer to it as to an expression of the average opinions of the people of Ireland. The man was a small farmer, of the poorer class, which is to say, he was not nearly upon a par with an English day labourer: let those who



sneer at my sources of information address themselves to the gentry—and much good may it do them.

In the course of the volume I shall no doubt have frequent occasion to refer mentally, if not otherwise, to my interview with this small farmer on the Fair-head beach; but in the following notes I shall confine myself to one or two topics of our discourse.

“How are you off for subsistence in this part of the country?”

“Badly enough, indeed. Potatoes and milk, a little meal, rarely a bit of meat—such is the lot of the most of us.”

“Do you know that your countrymen in the south are still worse off?”

“I do not know any thing about the south. All I know is, that things appear to me to be as bad here as they can be; and I think, therefore, that they cannot be worse anywhere else.”

“To what do you attribute the misery you complain of?”

“To the impossibility we find of paying our rent, and getting a decent living out of the land.”

“Do you complain of bad landlords?”

“I do not know: they cannot all be bad; and yet they seem to be pretty nearly all alike. There are men of four thousand a year in this part of the country whose tenants are the next thing to beggars. Surely this is not right. Four pounds over and

above a decent living would be a great thing to us—fourteen pounds would be a kind of fortune. If we were able to make this, we would not envy our landlords their four thousand a year.”

“What is the character of your priests?”

“To speak of the priests in general, I would say that they are a griping, close-fisted set. They no doubt discharge their sacred functions as they ought to do, but they are satisfied with that. We call them ‘Father,’ but I could wish that they treated us more like sons.”

“What is the character of the Protestant clergy?”

“I do not know; they are not remarkable in one way or other; they are just like other gentlemen. They have plenty of time, however; their estates are small; and, being worldly-minded men, they make the most of them. They are, in short, good and careful farmers, and I think therefore they do some service by residing in the country. There is one however—Mr. Stewart, of Ballycastle, who is more than a farmer or a gentleman. I have not had any thing to do with him myself; but it is reported among us that he is one of the very best men in all Ireland.”

“Do you complain much of tithes in this quarter?”

“We of course think it an intolerable hardship to pay for the support of a religion which we are taught from the cradle to believe is a heresy. Be-

sides, we cannot afford it. I myself pay four shillings to the priest; and, considering my circumstances, both he and I think it is enough. Yet over and above this, I am compelled to pay eighteen shillings and fourpence to the clergyman."

"The dues of the priest not being recoverable at law, you of course pay them willingly, however unamiable be the character of the individual?"

"What can we do? If we are slow in coming forward, he calls out our names from the altar, and tells us that the labourer being worthy of his hire, if we do not pay he will not work."

"I have heard that in case of obstinacy, or inability, he ultimately excommunicates you."

"That is untrue; and indeed there would be no use for any form of the kind, a denial of his spiritual functions being as bad as any thing that could befall us. There never can be inability in the case; for, however avaricious the priest may be, he has not the gross folly of the landlord, to exact more than he knows it to be possible to pay, and he is as well acquainted with our resources as we are ourselves."

"Do you suppose that the remission of this tax of eighteen shillings and fourpence would make a great difference to your family? Imagine the sum to be spent in provisions in the course of the year, and consider what improvement would take place in consequence in your comforts."

“Why, I cannot say that there would be much perceptible difference. Indeed I must confess that, even if relieved from tithes, we should be in pretty nearly the same situation as before. But that is not the question. Though miserably poor, we are not destitute of the ordinary feeling of human beings ; and we do not like to be compelled to support a church which we hate as erroneous, and despise as apostate—more especially when that is the church of only a paltry handful of the population of our country. A man may submit to be starved ; but can you wonder that he should feel chafed, if you insult him into the bargain ? With regard to myself, I am barely able to keep my family in common decency, but yet I voluntarily cheat our necessities out of four shillings to uphold that form of faith in which I was born and brought up. This, however, is not enough. The clergyman comes in after all, armed with the terrors of the law, to demand four or five times the sum to uphold what we are taught from the cradle to call a heresy !”

“Have you ever been better off than you are now ?”

“Never. But there are always some gentlemen trying to do us good, and that keeps up our hearts from year to year. O’Connell is now at the head of them.”

“Have you heard what O’Connell is trying to do for you ?”

“He is trying to relieve us from tithes, and that will be a great thing ; but we want besides sufficient food, decent clothing, and warm lodging.”

“Are you not surprised that, notwithstanding the great changes for the better which of late years have taken place in the political condition of Ireland, the Irish people should have been left in precisely the same deplorable state as before ?”

“I am, when I reflect upon it. Still, however, we think that something will at last be done for us—something, we know not what. It is this that keeps us quiet,—and woe to that man who shall destroy the hope, illusive though it be ! On the day this takes place, let but a leader present himself, and all Ireland will rise like one man.”

This is the sum of what the man said to me on the subject, although I do not affect to remember his particular expressions ; and it will not be thought surprising if, in my walk along the bay, the beautiful scenery by which I was surrounded should have fled from my eyes, and if grave and painful reflection should have obliterated, for the time, the impression made by Fairhead, and the Grey Man’s Path.

The popular excitement on the subject of tithes is very easily comprehended : the only wonder is, that the question should have remained unsettled even to our day. The Jews were in all probability taught the practice of consecrating tithes to the service of the church by older nations ; for we find

Abraham giving a tenth part of the spoils of battle to a certain Melchisedek, king of Salem, who was "the priest of the most high God." Jacob, in like manner, recognized the principle, by making a solemn covenant with God at Bethel, by which he engaged to devote to him a tenth part of every thing he received ; and, in the wilderness of Sinai, the tithe was definitively settled by Moses upon the tribe of Levi, the servants of the tabernacle, in lieu of a share in the inheritance of the tribes of Israel.

At this period, God was the visible head of his own church. All other forms of religion were idolatrous ; and the Chosen People were kept within the true fold by means of the most fearful miracles and judgments. There was no room for mistake—no license for wandering. Orthodoxy was understood by all who had ears to hear, and the slightest deviation was punished by whole holocausts of victims. Then came Christianity, presided over, in like manner, by the visible head of the church, by the Almighty himself in human form. Christ was not come to destroy, but to fulfil the law ; and, in reproving the Pharisees for tithing all manner of herbs, even mint and rue, and yet passing over the weightier matters of the law, namely, judgment, mercy, and faith, he added, "These ought ye to have done, and yet not leave the other undone."

In process of time Christianity was perverted, by the pride of men, into a vast, complicated, and

most magnificent superstition. The Deity was no longer the visible head of the church. The law was no longer given forth, in the midst of fire, and smoke, and thunderings, and lightnings from Mount Sinai, nor preached in the fields, and by the way side, by the meek and holy Jesus. The representative of God on earth was a priest, elected by political cabal, whose raiment was of cloth of gold, and whose symbolical crook was weightier than all the sceptres in Europe. The new religion was addressed to the soul through the senses; and the great majority of mankind being at that time plunged in the darkest ignorance, it was speedily forgotten that there was an esoteric meaning at all. The Levites of the tabernacle themselves were infected with the sensualities of the epoch; and, deserting their sacred charge, bowed down their hearts before the idols of the world.

When European civilization had reached a certain point, a change took place, of nature and necessity, which some called a reformation. The question then became, *What is the true Christianity? What is the religion which God himself taught the unstable Israelites, from generation to generation, and at length came down from heaven to perfect and establish in Christ Jesus?* Some answered indignantly, *It is the religion you see; it is the religion of the supremacy, temporal and spiritual, of the pope, and the papal priests!* Others clung by the same faith, only endeavouring to remove the

grosser abuses, and thus render more apparent the esoteric meaning of the doctrine. Luther defaced the idolatrous image of popery with blows which resounded throughout the world, and Calvin following, attempted to throw it down from its high place into the ditch. All Europe rose in arms to decide with the sword which was the true way to heaven; the rival devotees cut each other's throats with emulative zeal; and envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness became the attributes of the followers of Him whose advent was announced, on the midnight hills of Judea, by the angels of heaven proclaiming—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men!

When at length the sounds of strife had ceased, a mighty change was found to have taken place. Catholicism, wherever it still existed, had retained its pomp, but lost its power; and therefore it is that its adherents, in our day, belong chiefly to the ignorant classes, who are fond of empty show, and to that sex whose imagination is supposed to be more easily impressible than that of the other by external forms—by sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals. In Ireland this was the case as elsewhere; but another concurring cause retained in the original fold even the better informed, and more ambitious portions of the community, and thus rendered her what she is now, the most Catholic country in Europe. This cause may be briefly stated to be the fact, that although forming the



great mass of the nation, the Catholics of Ireland, owing to their political position, were the persecuted, and not the persecutors. A man may be reasoned out of an old taste or habit, or, if let alone, as he advances in knowledge or experience, he may leave it behind ; but no one can conceive that a thing which is worth persecution can be a mere idea, or a mere bauble, and thus the more he suffers the more it rises in his estimation, and the closer he clings to it.

In England what is called the Anglican church was established, of which the temporal head was the king for the time being, no matter of what family or dynasty, or of what moral and religious character. The hierarchy was not shorn of a single beam. The doctrine, it is true, was Calvinistic in its foundation ; but almost all the external grandeur of popery was retained, and as many of its forms as were not worse than empty or useless. Among these, for instance, may be mentioned the ceremony of the wedding-ring—the sign of the cross at baptism—bowing at the name of Jesus—changing the robes of the priest—kneeling at the commemorative feast of the sacrament. This in short was the reformation of the sovereign. In those countries, on the other hand, where the people took the lead, the church became either entirely republican, or adopted that middle form of government known by the name of Presbyterianism. But nowhere was there stability. Sect after sect arose with incredible celerity.

The followers of the double apostate Brown fled from episcopal persecution into Holland, and afterwards emigrated to America, to found there an empire destined to overshadow the old kingdoms of Europe from the other side of the Atlantic. At the present moment the dissenters in England are as numerous as the adherents of the established religion. Why then does the Anglican church still proudly ride out the storm? Because her ark is moored in the vitals of the *state*. Destroy this bond of connexion, and the mighty fabric will crumble in pieces before your eyes. Destroy this bond of connexion, and, instead of seeing the descendants of the baron-bishops of the iron age riding to the House of Lords in a carriage, you will witness the heart-rending spectacle of these holy men walking to the house of the Lord on their own feet. It would be absurd to waste time in arguing this point. The Church of England has always been, and is now, part and parcel of the state, and, if you sever the connexion, it must cease to exist as the national church.

The diversity of opinions, however, in the Christian world relates almost exclusively to outward forms and to church government. Some will have an arch-priest to look to who can determine all points of controversy by his own fiat, and permit the faithful to eat eggs and butter during Lent. Others desire that the kingdom of God should be governed by a temporal prince, and that its

apostolical chiefs and rulers should be placed on a footing of grandeur corresponding with that of the high officers of the state. Many crucify their countenances with straight lank hair smoothed over their brow, and Geneva bands under their chin ; and not a few conceive that brown, and its various shades are the fashionable wear in heaven, and that the distinguishing marks of the elect are to be found in the brim of the hat and the collar of the coat.

And what of all this ? Are we the less Christians for indulging our several fancies in matters that have no more to do with Christianity than the colour of an object has to do with its substance ? These are fit themes for argument among men ; but to suppose that God makes any distinction between a mitre and a broad-brimmed hat, is to suppose that he pays more regard to a white than to a black skin, or any other monstrous absurdity, opposed to the reason, yet reconcileable by the passions and prejudices of men.

There is nothing irreligious in the Anglican church : and, if it be the opinion of the majority of the nation, or of that which passes for such, that its existence, in its present form, is conducive to good order, and to the formation of moral habits, it undoubtedly ought to be supported. For my part, as an individual, I think that the smaller a society of Christians is, the better. In small societies men act as checks upon each other ; and vice

is under such continual surveillance that it is either rendered innocuous, or at length ceases to exist. The charge of hypocrisy, unless it be in the case of worldly men joining such societies from worldly motives, is, generally speaking, unfounded. To say that a man *affects* not to get drunk, for instance, is nonsense. But, at the same time, it cannot be denied that the sins of self-seeking, and spiritual pride are much more likely to beset dissenting congregations than that of the great body of the church. Simplicity of apparel, when that is carried to excess, indicates anything rather than simplicity of heart. The Quakers, to take an extreme case, although in other respects of great respectability of character, are, in my opinion, by far the most vain and ostentatious of all the sects of professing Christians. In the other sects the favourite ministers are, with or without their own will, placed in the situation of fashionable actors; and their natural humility, if they have any, is destroyed by the homage of their flocks. A dissenting minister must be of small notoriety indeed whose portrait is not stuck up in the shop windows, or in religious magazines, for the edification of Christians. What a menagerie might be collected from these specimens! But what is the use of such exhibitions? Do they answer any other purpose than to prove that the godly have the ugliest faces in the known world?

Till the separation between church and state be

formally determined on, the church must continue to draw its revenues (if it can) as heretofore; and the dissenters must continue to give unto Cæsar (if they choose) the things which are his, so long as Cæsar continues to reign. This state of things will last till the dissenters become—if they ever shall become—the great preponderating bulk of the nation. It is hard, no doubt, that in the meantime a man should be compelled to support two establishments; but the nature of the hardship is not well understood. He is not compelled to go to two churches—to subscribe to two doctrines. There is no spiritual tyranny in the case, and no malevolent feeling should be generated towards the church of England. The thing is entirely an affair of state policy, with which Christianity, properly speaking, has nothing to do. The dissenter is in no worse situation than the man who voluntarily relieves the poor of his own village, and yet is compelled at the same time to contribute his quota to the poor's rates of the district. At the same time the fact is so obvious as to suggest itself at once even to the most childish capacity, that if the landed revenues of the church *can* be made productive enough to satisfy her wants, it would betray the most lamentable imbecility to excite the hostile feelings of one half of the nation by demanding church rates of the dissenters.

As for the state question, the policy of doing away with a national church altogether, that is too

weighty a subject to be entered upon here. All I contend for is, that angry feelings have been excited without cause; that the hundred different churches in this country are all churches of Christ; that their congregations are brethren; that the forms characteristic of each society have nothing to do with the doctrine, which is universal; and that all denominations of Christians form a single, rich, and many-coloured carpet, spread beneath the footstool of the Almighty.

But, as regards the Catholics of Ireland, the case is different. In the first place, the church of England has dissented from them, not they from the church of England; and, in the second place, which is of more importance, they form the great preponderating bulk of the people of Ireland. When these “aliens in religion” were in the character of a conquered nation, it was perfectly right that they should have been made to support the state religion of the conqueror; but now, when they are aliens in nothing, save, alas! the articles of board and lodging, it is surely time that this should have an end.

But, say the collectors of Irish tithes, if all the Catholics were in one part of the island, and all the Protestants in the other, a financial separation might take place; but if in a Catholic village we find a dozen Protestants, is not salvation as important to these twelve men as if they were twelve thousand? Must we not have a church in that

village? and how is such an establishment to be supported? The argument is so far good; but its importance is exaggerated. I should like to take these tithe-collectors on a little tour in such parts of Scotland as most nearly resemble the parts of Ireland they allude to in poverty and ignorance. They would hardly believe that with such means and appliances my countrymen are the most religious people in Europe. They would measure with astonishment the rugged hills, and desert heaths, which the peasant traverses, with grave pace and Sabbath countenance before he can reach his cottage-temple. They would watch the steps of the wedding-guests, bidden by the Lord of the feast from far and near:—the sedate farmer, with nicely-brushed coat, and hair as smooth as silk, a staff in one hand and his bible in the other—the demure maiden, with kilted petticoats, bearing her shoes and stockings, made up in a bundle with her psalm-book, and nicely folded pocket handkerchief as white as snow—the serious matron enveloped in a red cloak—the stalwart youth, “our nation’s hope and pride,” striding along with the step of Hercules, and the gravity of a patriarch—the little children, conscious of Sunday, and feeling, even from the pains which had been taken with their dress, that they, too, were personages of the procession, and individuals of the bidden company. From all points of the compass come such groups as these, verging towards a central point, and

vanishing as they approach it. They have entered the church—not the mere steeple-house of their village, but the Bethel of their faith; and does not the companion of our journey pause, tearful and heart-stricken, as their voices rise suddenly from that lonely place in a wild and solemn swell upon the breeze?

I am not such an enthusiast as to find fault either with the magnificence, or the physical comforts, with which the English delight to surround their form of religion; but, at the same time, I think there are cases, in which these may, with great propriety, be dispensed with. The church establishment throughout a great part of Ireland should be cut down to a level with the very worst districts of Scotland. This would go some length in facilitating the entire abolition of tithes, which ought to come, which must come, and which will come, with very little further delay.

If tithes are proper, it is robbery to appropriate them to any thing else than the support of what is considered the true church; if improper, it is folly to argue about their appropriation at all. I should think, however, that there can be no serious question among sensible men as to the party on whom the payment of tithes, proper or improper, should fall. That party must undoubtedly be the one deriving benefit from the produce of the soil, or, in other words, enjoying a residue after the necessities of animal life have been satisfied. That



this is not the peasant the reader is aware ; and, if he supposes that it is in the power of the landlord to reshift the burthen from his own shoulders, in the shape of rent, he is incorrectly informed with regard to the condition of Ireland. If a man enjoy a residue, however small, he may be deprived of that residue ; but, even after the deduction of tithes from his burthens, the peasant will have no residue. The emancipation from tithes will be little more than a nominal relief: it will enable him, not to satisfy his hunger at each meal, but to progress in some degree towards doing so. It will not enable him to pay one farthing more rent for his land. There are few proprietors in Ireland to whom I would not undertake to pay half a crown for every shilling of rent they can obtain more than they do now, till the people are fairly in a condition to satisfy the demands of nature.

I say it is robbery to appropriate tithes to anything else than the support of the church ; and the question then is, in what way can the church be most efficiently supported ?

What is her present condition ? What benefit has she conferred upon Ireland ? What progress has she made in conversion ? The answers to these queries are obvious. She is still, after the lapse of centuries, a colony in a foreign country, defended by bayonets ; instead of conferring anything upon Ireland, she has drawn from her blood, tears, and money ; in conversion she is stationary, leaving

almost the entire work to the presbyterians and dissenters. Now, what is the explanation of this? Is it impossible for the Irish to become protestants? Are they catholic by nature? or has the Church of England adopted an improper method, or neglected its duty altogether? In Scotland Catholicism was persecuted still more bitterly than in Ireland, but Scotland has become a protestant country. The cause of this is obvious. The Scottish reformers did not merely endeavour to substitute one form of belief for another: they endeavoured, by means of education, to render the people themselves capable of judging between the two; and, having effected this, the Reformation was accomplished. The eloquence, or reasoning, of the preachers may have opened the ears of their audience; but it was the parochial schools which convinced their understanding; and, at the present day, the remnants of catholicism in the country are in exact proportion to the paucity of the means of education.

The Anglican church was planted in Ireland on a plan somewhat similar. The pastor was not only to minister to his flock in religious services, but to educate them. The pastor, however, contented himself with expounding the Word to those who chose to listen; he performed just one half of his duty, pocketing the stipend for the whole; and, in consequence of this neglect, assisted by political persecution, the Irish are Catholics to this day.

These are facts which may be deduced by the meanest intellect from the common histories of the time ; and I found upon them my opinion, that if tithes *are* to continue, the appropriation of a portion of them to the education of the people will be an act of justice, not only to Ireland, but to the Church.

## CHAPTER IX

Peculiarities of the Causeway Region—Carriek-a-rede and its Swinging Bridge—Charges of the Guides—Trait of Character—The Giant's Causeway—Tradition of its Origin—Cave of Porteoön—Port-na-Spania—Pleaskin—Bushmills—Harvest—The Irish of the Seventeenth Century—Of the Sixteenth—Of the Nineteenth—Unhappy Analogy.

FROM Ballycastle to the Giant's Causeway the scenery is of a very peculiar character ; and one is, at first, at a loss to account for a kind of originality it exhibits. We at length, however, perceive that we are gradually advancing into a region where the larger specimens of vegetation are unknown. The trees shrink into shrubs ; the shrubs, as we proceed, grow downwards into bushes ; and even the bushes, at length, dwindle and then die. There is but one exception admitted by this general law ; and the Irish thorn, though not patronized, is at least tolerated by the tyrannical spirit of the clime. But the thorn feels that, like a slave, it exists only by sufferance. Thin, grey, and stunted, it crouches before the blast, turning its

head away as if in awe, or humility. On the leeward side, some green leaves and buds remind the traveller of the smiles of unconscious infancy: but the branches next the sea, like older denizens of the world, are brown, withered, and weather-beaten. No striking inequalities present themselves in the soil. Before us there are but the plain, the precipice, and the ocean. Over this dreary domain the north wind is the sole ruler, controlling, at its pleasure, the other agents of nature. The edge of the causeway coast, indeed, is seen at a distance; but it presents nothing excepting the line of land meeting the line of sea. It would be impossible for the traveller to guess that he was within so short a space of objects so striking and so wonderful.

The line of coast is sufficiently remarkable to induce the tourist to proceed by sea to Bengore; but the weather being unfavourable, I was obliged to content myself with the land journey. The promontory of Kenbane, however, composed of snowy limestone, is said to be a fine object, when viewed from the water, and a cave of basaltic columns to be well worth a visit. The latter object is in the vicinity of Carrick-a-rede, another promontory which I saw sufficiently well to perceive that its famous swinging bridge was *not* there. This headland is divided by a chasm, not longitudinal, like the Grey Man's Path, but lateral, over which a bridge of ropes is thrown during the

fishing season. The rock is here only about eighty feet above the water ; and the chasm not more than sixty feet wide ; but nevertheless, the swinging bridge, consisting simply of a line of planks, secured upon two cables, with a cord for the hand may well appear terrific to the imagination. The cliffs are wild and abrupt in the extreme, and the sea rises around them with a ceaseless swell.

The insulated rock is used for the fisherman to stand who watches, with a telescope, the shoal of salmon in their periodical search for the mouth of a river. The fish come round the coast close by the rocks, and being interrupted by the island of Carrick-a-rede, are easily taken, if their approach is perceived. I spoke to a man who was in the habit of crossing the swinging bridge, and he confessed that it was not without a beating heart, and a blanching cheek, he had performed the feat for the first time.

Long before reaching the Causeway, we were met by one of the guides, who seemed to think that this rencontre gave him a legal right to take us under his charge. He kept up with the vehicle by running ; and in the meanwhile, took care to describe the country as we passed, in order to show us that he had already entered upon his office.

The regular charge of the guides I understood to be five shillings, and that of the boatmen, twelve shillings and sixpence ; but besides these there are

a variety of incidental items which render the Causeway rather an expensive exhibition. One man fires the pistol which produces the echo prescribed by the books ; another professes to keep the path to the cave clear for your honour's feet ; and a smoke-dried carline gives you to drink of the Giant's Well, a spring of pure water which oozes up between two of the pillars, and which, on tasting, you find to have been miraculously converted *in transitu* by the old witch into whisky. Lastly, more than a dozen men and boys follow you through the whole adventure, in spite of your expostulations, to offer boxes of mineralogical specimens.

It was impossible to refuse expending a trifle among these last : but as the specimens were small and worthless, I did not choose to be troubled with them, and accordingly, after having paid the price, desired that a single box should be made up from the collections of the whole, and sent after me. I did the poor fellows injustice, however, in supposing that they would act like civilized men, and forget the order ; for in a short time I received my specimens, which were actually a selection of the best pieces. After all, there are so many good points in the character of this unhappy people, that I am sometimes tempted to blame myself for speaking the truth about the bad ones.

Fairhead, the Grey Man's Path, and the natural ruins at the bottom, are beyond comparison the most remarkable objects in the Antrim Coast ;

but the Causeway affords more gratification to the traveller who is fond of examining the curiosities of nature. He descends from Fairhead, where he has been overwhelmed by a thousand vague, but grand impressions, to examine leisurely at the Causeway the materials of the magnificent structures which in this region front the sea. In the Causeway itself, he finds the strange, the fantastic, the extravagant, but not the majestic. There is no elevation to produce the sublime: no formless and unconscious idea of danger to create awe. His curiosity, surprise—wonder, if you will, are excited; but he is able to listen calmly to the guide, count the sides of the polygons, and expatiate on the possible, and impossible causes of basaltic formations.

On the Causeway we see before our eyes, and beneath our feet, the materials of which the neighbouring steeps are formed. We see a natural pavement composed of polygons of a hard, smooth, and ponderous stone, without a grain of earth, or blade of vegetation, or room for either between: and by the inequalities of the upper surface, we perceive that each of these polygons, though so closely fitted to its neighbour, is a separate and distinct pillar. More wonderful still, the pillars are not composed of a single block, thrown up in an instantaneous caprice of nature, but of several joints, fitted to each other, the convex with the concave ends, by the nicest possible articulations; and,



most wonderful of all, these mysterious columns stand, in every case, almost as erect as if their perpendicularity had been determined by the plummet.

This last peculiarity is the more surprising, as there is every reason to conclude that their formation was attended with extreme violence. I gather this from the appearance of those formless masses of basalt termed *whindykes*, which rise up here and there upon the Causeway, and seem to have been gushes of molten metal that burst suddenly forth in the midst of the regularity of the work.

But let not the reader be deceived, as most readers are, by the name of pillars, and suppose that the Giant's Causeway is composed of such regular columns as bear up the portico of a temple. They are not "exquisitely shaped pillars," as some books assure him, but irregular prisms, generally of five sides, each side being different in dimensions from the other. Neither is the Causeway itself a regular mole, inclining from an altitude of two hundred feet, till it is lost in the sea, but distinct fields of pillars, separated unequally by *whindykes*, with here and there considerable elevations. The whole surface is about a hundred feet wide, and, so far as it can be seen, six hundred feet in length, What the depths may hide no one can tell; but it is not a very wild speculation to suppose that the Causeway forms the pavement of the sea, and might conduct a submarine traveller to the caves of Staffa.

The tradition among the peasantry is somewhat different. According to this authority, the bridge of communication was at one period actually completed, and at the present day, we should find nothing but its ruins at the bottom. The architects were Fin Mac Cumhal, and his comrades, the Scandinavian sons of Frost, who constructed the work, in order to facilitate their operations in a war which they waged against the opposite country. The enemy were thunderstruck at the sight of this gigantic bridge, presenting a highway to their ocean-girded retreats. In this extremity they had recourse to the Druids; who, jealous themselves of the growing power of the giants, willingly exerted all their supernatural skill. The sacred fire blazed on every hill, and blood flowed on every altar; till at length a spell was wrought mighty enough to shake the depths of the ocean. The bridge was overthrown; and, in order to signalize their power and vengeance to the latest race upon the earth, the Druids turned the giants into stone: and these monuments of priestly wrath are in our day distinctly seen on various parts of the coast.

Let me remark that before reaching the Causeway I entered one cave; and that in consequence of the dangerous swell of the sea, I did *not* enter another, to which access can only be obtained by water. The cave I saw, which is called Portcoon, is certainly worth a visit to those who will take

the trouble of retiring into its depths, and looking back. It is entered dryshod, or nearly so, by a lateral passage ; but the sea comes in by the front opening in huge billows, and presents an appearance not less grand than the stranger is seized, in spite of himself, with the idea that the cavern will be filled to the roof. The depth of the recess is not apparent to the eye, being heaped with masses of white foam as large as hogsheads, but only just heavier than the atmosphere. The effect is supposed to be increased by the report of a pistol which is usually fired on the occasion ; but on a tempestuous day, like that of my visit, nothing can be finer than the rush and roar of the sea exaggerated by the thousand echoes of the cave.

Having satiated my curiosity with the wonders of the Causeway, I climbed the steep behind, by a narrow zigzag path ; a feat to which the guides, and the books, affect to attach a high degree of importance. The ascent would certainly not be agreeable to an asthmatic subject, but the idea of danger attending it to a man in good health is ridiculous. Even women and children are frequently seen toiling up the most precipitous of these paths with loads of kelp on their backs.

The view from the summit is well worth the trouble of the ascent, comprehending, as it does, most of the promontories of the coast from Bengore Head on one hand to Dunluce Castle on the other. The visitor's route lies in the former direction ;

in which the principal objects are Port-na-Spania, the promontory of Pleaskin, and Bengore Head.

Port-na-Spania is a bay, or inlet, exhibiting several curious combinations of pillars, together with those that are called the chimney-pots,—several insulated columns, standing on a ridge, where they are seen from the Causeway and numerous other points of view. These natural monuments, if you will believe the guides, were fired at by some ships of the Spanish Armada, the crew mistaking them for the chimney-pots of a castle! Bengore Head is only remarkable for the view it affords; but Pleaskin, owing to its variety of colour, and the arrangement of its pillars, forms in itself one of the finest pictures imaginable. With the following accurate description of the promontory, given in one of Mr. Hamilton's Letters, I shall conclude this brief notice of the Causeway coast.

“ The summit of Pleaskin is covered with a thin grassy sod, under which lies the natural basaltic rock, having generally a hard surface, somewhat cracked and shivered. At the depth of ten or twelve feet from the summit, this rock begins to assume a columnar tendency, and forms a range of massy pillars of basaltes, which stand perpendicular to the horizon, presenting, in the sharp face of the promontory, the appearance of a magnificent gallery, or colonnade, upwards of sixty feet in height. This colonnade is supported on a solid

base of coarse, black, irregular rock, near sixty feet thick, abounding with blebs and airholes—but though comparatively irregular, it may be evidently observed to affect a particular figure, tending, in many places, to run into regular forms, resembling the shooting of salts, and many other substances, during a hasty crystallization.

“Under this great bed of stone, stands a second range of pillars, between forty and fifty feet in height, less gross, and more sharply defined, than those of the upper story, many of them, on a closer view, emulating even the neatness of the columns in the Giant’s Causeway. This lower range is borne on a layer of red ochre stone, which serves as a relief to show it to great advantage. These two admirable natural galleries, together with the interjacent mass of irregular rock, form a perpendicular height of one hundred and seventy feet; from the base of which the promontory, covered over with rock and grass, slopes down to the sea for the space of two hundred feet more: making in all a mass of near four hundred feet in height, which in beauty, and variety of its colouring, in elegance and novelty of arrangement, and in the extraordinary magnitude of its objects, cannot readily be rivalled by anything of the kind at present known.”

Leaving the Causeway I took up my abode for the night at the village of Bushmills. In this little place, the inhabitants are comparatively comfort-

able, nearly a hundred of them receiving constant employment from Sir Francis Mac Naghten. A resident like this is an especial providence in such a region, where crops are still more precarious than elsewhere. In general the corn ripens early, owing to the land being wholly destitute of shade ; but when a late summer occurs, as was the case at present, they do not ripen at all. Everywhere during my journey I had seen green corn at the end of the harvest time ; but there were still hopes of the sun at length blazing forth, and remedying the evil. In this extreme northern nook, however, the chance was already past, for here a harvest delayed is a harvest lost.

I mentioned in last year's volume the opinion, founded on late discoveries, that owing to want of capital, and bad husbandry, the soil of Ireland produces not more than a third of what it ought to do. It is odd that the very same remark should have been made in the year 1610.

"I might affirm," says Barnabe Rich, "and confidentlie conclude, that throughout the whole realme of Ireland, there is not the third part of that profit raised that Ireland would affoord." This, however, he attributes not only to "ill husbandrie," but to "so much of the country lying waste for want of inhabitants." In our time there is no want of inhabitants, and yet the country still continues to lie waste.

"To speak of Ireland generally," he observes,

“it is replenished with rivers, with woods, with bogs, and with as good lande for corne and pasture as any Europe affoord; but not so well manured, nor so well husbanded: for the farmers of Ireland are far to seeke in many pointes of good husbandry, and the women (for the most part) have as little skill of huswifry.” One would think that Barnaby had travelled in Ireland yesterday, instead of two hundred and twenty-seven years ago! Stanilhurst, a contemporary of this author, is much more favourable in his character of the people: who, according to him, are religious, frank, amorous, ireful, sufferable of infinite pains, very glorious, many sorcerers, excellent horsemen, delighted at wars, great almsgivers, passing in hospitality.

“They follow the dead corps to the grave,” continues he, “with howling, and barbarous outcries, pittiful in appearance, whereof grew (as I suppose) the proverbe, *To weep Irish*.” This testimonial is pulled to pieces by the aforesaid Barnaby with great heat.

“‘Sufferable of infinite pains!’” saith he, “but yet at any hand they will not, or cannot indure to *labour*, for there is not a greater plaguesore to Ireland than the ydlenesse thereof. ‘Very glorious!’—very true; and they are no less proud, for the meanest Shackerell, that hath scarce a mantle to wrap himself in, hath as proud a mind as O’Neal himself, when he sits upon a green bank

under a bush in his greatest majesty. ‘Delighted with wars!’—they are delighted with rebellion, commotions, and insurrections: and lastly, Mr. Stanihurst seemeth to find fault at the manner of Irish burials,—I think it would be admired in any part of Christendom, to see the manners of the Irish, how they use to carry their dead to their graves, in the remote partes of the country. A stranger that had never seen the sight before, at encounter, would believe that a company of hags or hellish fiendes, were carrying a dead body to some infernall mansion; for what with the unseemlinesse of their shewes, and the ill-faring noyse they doe make, with their howling and crying, an ignorant man would sooner believe they were devils of hell than Christian people.”

This however, is going out of fashion, and some other points of manners mentioned by the same author are already among the things that were. He tells, for instance, that it was esteemed exceedingly unlucky to wash or cleanse milking vessels, and that he himself saw the pails in common use “furred half an inch thick with filthe.” The customs of agriculture, too, however much found fault with, must certainly have received some improvement, since in his time the horses, five abreast, were yoked to the plough, neither with cords, chains, nor lines, “but every horse by his owne taile!”



Perjury was as universal a crime then as now ; but a remark of this author, who had a forty years' personal knowledge of Ireland, allows us to account, in some measure, for their facility in swearing falsely upon the Bible. They did so in that ignorant age *because it was an English book* ; and the practice may be supposed to be continued now, rather as a transmitted custom than as a wilful and intentional profanity.

It is painful, but curious, to observe the descent of the Irish character through four centuries, modified only by the modifications of the people's wrongs. In the time of Elizabeth the same praises of the country are contrasted with the same censures of the inhabitants ; whose very boldness in war is represented as something to be condemned and detested. Some verses, (and those not the best) of the following extract from "the Image of Ireland," a poem written by John Derricke in the year 1578, are given in the notes to Rokeby.

“ Though that the royall soyle,  
And fertill Irishe grounde,  
With thousande sondrie pleasante thinges  
Most nobly doe abounde.

Though that the yearth I saie  
Be blist with heavenly thinges,  
And though tis like the fragrant flower  
In pleasant Maie that springs.

Yet when I did beholde  
Those which possesse the same  
Their manners lothsome to be told  
As irksome for to name,

I marvailde in my minde,  
And therefore did muse  
To see a bride of heavenlie hue  
An ugly feere to chuse.

This bride it is the soyle,  
The bridegroome is the karne,  
With writhed glibbes like wicked sprits,  
With visage rough and stearne ;

With sculles upon their poules,  
Instead of civil lappes,  
With speares in hand, and swordes by sides  
To beare of after clappes ;

With jackettes long and large  
Whiche shroude simplicitie,  
Though spitefull dartes which they do beare  
Importe iniquitie.

Their skirtes be verie strange,  
Not reachyng paste the thie,  
With pleates on pleates that pleated are  
As thick as pleates may lye ;

Whose sleeves hang trailing downe  
Almost unto the shoe,  
And with a mantle commonlie  
The Irishe karne doe goe."



The poet then goes on to describe the manners of the kerne as being suitable to their garb. After fighting comes feasting. An ox is slaughtered, and the entrails torn out, and thrown upon the embers for their delectation. The priest is placed at the head of the feast—for table there is none—and next him the surgeon, and next the chief, with his lady, whether wife or mistress. Half sodden flesh is the staple of the banquet, for bread is scarce; and the drink is water, milk, or broth. As for wine or whisky, these come only on occasions of extraordinary good luck. After eating and drinking, the bard pours forth his wild legends exciting the hearers to emulate their fathers' fame; and the priest, calling upon them in the name of God to strike one more blow at the sacrilegious enemy, the company rise up with renewed enthusiasm, and rush towards the English pale.

This is the picture of a people insulted, outraged, and hunted like beasts of prey, in their own mountains; making treaties without faith, because compelled by terror, and breaking faith without dishonour because force invalidates the compact; crouching one moment, like a beaten hound before an enemy, to contend with whom would be madness, and the next rising up against their spoilers in that very madness, excited by the artifices of worthless demagogues, and their own despair.

The Irish kerne of the sixteenth century are the

small farmers and labourers of to-day—the great majority, and yet the Paria caste of the nation. They do not inquire into the causes of their situation. They only know that they bear the burthens of their masters ; that they sow while another reaps ; that they starve in the midst of plenty ; that no one talks to them of hope save priests and agitators. Do you blame these men if they are idle, ignorant, superstitious, disaffected, and insincere ?





## CHAPTER X.

Dunluce Castle—Anecdote of its Capture—Change of Scenery—Coleraine—Salmon Fisheries—Condition of the Inhabitants—Lamentable Disunion—A Bagman's Notions of the Irish—Newtownlimavady—O'Cahan's Castle—Anecdote—Dungiven and its Ruins—Condition of the People—Elovements—Instance of Conjugal Infidelity—Abuse of the Local Custom of eloping to be married—Approach to Londonderry—The City.

FROM Bushmills to Coleraine I found little to look at, except the ruins of Dunluce castle. An excellent idea of this hoary pile is conveyed in the accompanying engraving; and I am not sure that it will be much worth the traveller's while to inquire into it more in detail. The effect of the picture is seen as well from the road as anywhere else, and its sole value consists in effect. A rock in the sea divided by a deep, but narrow, chasm from the land, crested with mouldering walls, black and shattered, but still grim in their decay—such is Dunluce castle. In the interior, a vaulted closet is pointed out called the Banshee's Tower; and the place is seen where, one stormy day, a portion

of the building fell into the boiling deep below. Nine persons lost their lives by this catastrophe.

The first possessor of the castle known in history was an Irish chief called Mac Quillan ; from whom it was wrested by the Scottish Mac Donnells, earls of Antrim. Subsequently it was captured, and recaptured, many times. In 1584 it was thought necessary to bring six pieces of artillery against it ; which were used as little as possible that the walls might not be injured. In the following year, the manner of its capture shows the jealous distinctions that were kept up between the English and Irish, and the necessity which existed for them.

Sir John Perrot placed in the castle, as ward or constable, a man on whom he could depend, being, as he supposed, of the English Pale. The constable, however, although a man of honour, was a Carew of the north ; and being naturally more inclined to the society of his own countrymen and kindred than to that of strangers, he gradually changed the English into a native garrison. Two of the new comers turned traitors. They hoisted up, by means of ropes, one dark night, fifty of the enemy's soldiers and surprised the castle. They offered the constable his life, and a safe convoy wherever he chose ; but bitterly cursing his own folly and their ingratitude, the gallant Carew resisted to the last, and died sword in hand.

After Dunluce, I found the trees begin to shoot up by degrees, and the whole landscape to lose



the peculiarities of the Causeway coast. On entering Coleraine, it seemed to me to have the aspect of a very poor, but still a comfortable town. It did not convey the slightest idea of a linen mart; and, as I had expected to find it a Belfast on a small scale, I was for some time at a loss to account for its humble appearance, and rural quiet. One of my usual perambulations, however, explained the mystery. There are here no great linen manufactories, as in the northern capital; the cloth being wrought in the peasants' huts. The weavers, therefore, of Coleraine, instead of being crowded into a centre are the population of the neighbouring country. The women have little or no employment, the yarn made by machinery being almost universally adopted.

There are at Coleraine two extensive salmon fisheries, one called the Cranagh, a mile below the town, and the other a mile above, called the Cutts. At the former, which I did not visit, the fish are taken in nets extending across the river; at the latter, by a contrivance still more certain in its operation. The spot is just above where the Bann rushes over a ledge of rocks. The salmon, obedient to their instinct, jump to the top of the ledge, and then, continuing their journey, enter by small holes into several stone enclosures. At the further end they find their progress stopped by palisades, which they attempt in vain to overleap; and the same instinct which teaches them to

ascend the river forbidding them to turn back, they remain there till they are taken. These fisheries are not advancing. The Scottish improvement in the construction of nets being now generally adopted, more salmon are taken on the coasts than formerly, and, in consequence, fewer in the rivers.

The peasants in the neighbourhood of Coleraine appear to be tolerably well off, necessaries of all kinds being cheap. They eat *some* bread, and some butter, and have always buttermilk to their potatoes. Land is let at reasonable prices, and in small quantities, and, unlike the manufacturers of Belfast, who must pay for everything in money, they can raise a few ridges of potatoes for themselves.

In consequence of the general use of machinery, yarn is so cheap that women cannot earn more than twopence halfpenny by a hard day's work, although even at that rate they continue to spin. Formerly the farmers' daughters made up a little fund by their own industry; but now young women of that class become servants in the town, when they can obtain a place, at three pounds a year.

The town is torn to pieces by religio-political dissensions. A Protestant, for instance, will rarely hire a Catholic servant; and at drinking parties, the conclusion is sure to be a quarrel. The election of a neighbouring resident landlord, very well

liked in the town, would have been carried unanimously, had he not refused to assist in the ceremony of laying the first stone of a Catholic chapel. He even refused to sell materials from his quarry for the unholy purpose ; and the consequence was that he was thrown out, though only by a small majority—an event which was signalized by the windows of every liberal's house being smashed by the enraged bigots. In this state of things education makes but little progress ; the free schools, which are not on the national system, being nearly useless.

I had here some conversation with a party of commercial travellers, whom I met in the inn, which might enable one to draw some curious conclusions regarding the character of the Irish.

The lower classes are so bigoted to their customs, that the goods requisite for one part of the country are unsaleable in another. For instance, there are no white handled knives to be seen south of a line drawn from Belfast to Coleraine ; while to the north of that line there are none with black handles. Throughout the country, the knife which shows the iron at the end of its handle is preferred, the other not being considered sufficiently strong. The real Irish knife, made on purpose for Ireland, is that awkward-looking machine, with a blade at either end. For other classes of society, the goods must be showy and cheap. It matters not for the quality ; for whatever may be the difference in

this respect between any two articles, a difference of five per cent in the price will determine the purchase. I saw an order to an immense amount, for scissors, at the rate of sixpence halfpenny *per dozen*; the blades of which, in consequence of their not being tempered alike, would be useless in a week. Vast quantities of imitation silver, as might be expected, are sold in Ireland; and I heard of a gentleman giving twelve pounds for an article which in genuine silver would only have cost twenty pounds. Here it would be difficult to say whether poverty and vanity, or want of forethought were the most in fault; since the materials of the one, after it had finished its service, would have been worth in money the whole price of the other when new.

Leaving Coleraine, I found the road for some time extremely dreary and uninteresting; our route lying over a series of hills, which were in great part bog land. At length, however, a fine valley opened to our view, with the river Roe winding through it, and the mountains of Donegal on the right. Newtownlimavady is a very tolerable little town; but being anxious to see the ruins of O'Cahan's castle, the principal seat of that once powerful family, I sent on my baggage to Londonderry, and set out to walk to Dungiven, along the banks of the Roe. My expedition was vain with regard to its object; for I could neither see nor hear of anything which could possibly be the remains of a

castle, with the exception of a gateway, near a bleachfield. But the Roe, at least in that portion, is one of the most picturesque rivers in Ireland; and I spent some hours in wandering through the mazes of its thickly wooded banks, hardly murmuring at the disappointment which was so well compensated. With regard to O'Cahan's castle, the following anecdote given in the Statistical Survey, is worth a long description.

“The duchess of Buckingham on her way by Limavady, in the time of Charles I. was induced by curiosity to visit the wife of O'Cahan, whose castle was demolished, and himself banished. The situation of this venerable matron was characteristic of her fortunes: she was discovered amid the ruins of her once splendid residence; the broken casements stuffed with straw, and a miserable fire of a few branches before her. Thus lodged the aged wife of O'Cahan. She was found by her noble visitant sitting on her bent hams in the smoke, and wrapped in a blanket.”

Rejoining the road, I continued my wanderings through rather a picturesque country, till suddenly a great valley appeared, surrounded by lofty hills. Here was Dungiven, the neatest and cleanest little town I have seen in Ireland—or perhaps anywhere else. It consists of a single long and broad street, with two or three narrow avenues diverging, all lined with thatched cottages, and small but respectable looking houses intermingled. The

whole has a look of country homeliness, which, when conjoined with neatness and cleanliness, is more attractive to the traveller whose mind is in a healthy state than a city of palaces.

The ruins of the castle of Dungiven stand at the top of the street, and are not very striking in themselves, although, standing on a slope, they command some fine views in the valley. This place was built in the time of James I. with a fosse and mounds in front, and flanked by two round towers. The interior courts appear to have been well fortified, but the work of ruin is so complete as to leave little but guesses to the non-antiquarian.

At some distance beyond, lonely and sad-looking, are the ruins of the church, where the sept of O'Cahan were buried, and where at this day their descendants and conquerors mingle in the grave. The building is distinguished by its sculpture, the remains of which attest both wealth and cultivated taste, on the part of its architects.

My assertion may be remembered that the native Irish were driven by the settlers into the mountainous and less fertile parts of the country, where, generally speaking, their descendants remain to the present time—thus giving rise to the popular error, that the Catholics are, *because of their religion*, poorer and less civilized than the Protestants. The facts of the case are so clearly shown in Dungiven and its neighbourhood, that

it is worth while to pause here for a moment.

In a very intelligent Survey of the parish by the Rev. Alexander Ross, he affirms that the inhabitants are divided into two races of men as totally distinct as if they belonged to different countries and regions; one exhibiting the poverty and barbarism of the “mere Irish,” and the other rejoicing in all the earnest industry and canny forethought of the Scots. The former race inhabits the mountains, and the latter the plains; and each may be allotted to its peculiar nation even by the patronimics of the people. Mr. Ross supposes the difference to arise from the Irish clinging to the barbarous tastes and habits of their ancestors:—but does he suppose that this would have been the case had their lot been the fertile valley, had their religion been fostered by the state, and had their social condition been an object of solicitude to the nation? If the two races had exchanged positions at the time of the settlement, I am of opinion that a similar change would have been found to have taken place in their moral characteristics.

In this part of the country the introduction of mill-yarn has completely done away with spinning, and the women, therefore, have no work fit for the sex. I met a pretty, delicate-looking girl on the road, who replied to my questions—“Deed, Sir, it would be hard to say what women do here—

abouts, and what they do not. For my part, I put my hand, sometimes to one turn, and sometimes to another ; and whiles they send me out to work in the fields, like a man, or a beast."

The Scottish accent which is general here, is more pleasing to the ear than in Scotland, because it is less broad. The voices, also, are extremely agreeable ; and the simplicity of expression and manner is altogether unmingled with vulgarity.

In this neighbourhood, but more especially in the neighbouring county of Tyrone, I heard of a very singular custom, which has been little, if at all, remarked. We hear every day of "forcible abductions ;" and the frequency of the crime excites at once our surprise and detestation : but we are not aware that such brutalities have grown out of an ancient peculiarity in the manners of the people. It was—and, in some districts, it is now—the *custom* for marriages to be brought about by a voluntary elopement. When the lover's wooing is successful, he does not go to negotiate with the parents, but carries off his bride to a neighbouring village, or to a friend's house, and there the treaty is entered into by means of ambassadors.

When they reach their destination, they find a crowd of the bridegroom's friends waiting to receive them, provided, as well as their circumstances allow, with whisky to enable them to pass the time. Sometimes the host, before admitting them, swears the youthful pair upon the Book that their



purpose is lawful and honest, and that the marriage is actually to go on ; the priest is then sent for, and, being properly instructed by the lover, he proceeds to the parents of the bride to demand their approbation. In this mission he is generally successful ; for it is only on rare occasions that the maiden makes an imprudent choice.

Sometimes, however,—though rarely—irregularities take place. Excited by the whisky, and the felicitations of friends, the young girl forgets that an important preliminary is still to be arranged. Then comes the father's refusal of the *tocher* demanded,—and as a matter of course under the circumstances—the lover's infidelity to his vows. For this reason, if for no other, the practice of elopements is greatly condemned by the priests, who frequently admonish the young women from the pulpit upon the subject. They advise them, since they will not consult their temporal, to consult their spiritual relations ; promising that if no reasonable objection to the match appear, they will marry them at once, in spite of their father.

Although it may be collected from the above that the girls of this district are not very tender in the point of delicacy, yet conjugal infidelity is almost unknown. The last case I could hear of occurred some years ago, when the wife left her husband and children, and fled into England with a lodger. The husband, after trying for a little while the state of single blessedness, went to the bishop

to declare that he could not, and would not, do without a wife, and to insist upon being married to somebody else. The indignant bishop threatened to *horsewhip* him. By the inferior clergy he was only laughed at; and at length he wrote to his wife, who, being by this time home-sick, came back, and things went on as well as if nothing had happened.

From Dungiven I set out for Londonderry, passing through a beautiful country, and over a succession of undulating hills generally cultivated to the summit. From a circumstance which had taken place only the night before, I heard a little more on the subject of elopements. The daughter of a farmer whose house I passed had fled with her suitor; and the person who gave me the history of the affair remarked that the custom was getting gradually into disuse. The young men, he said, not satisfied with voluntary elopements, had latterly been guilty of everything but manual violence. Having fixed upon a girl whose parents were sufficiently wealthy for his purpose, the aspirant took care to meet her and her friends at a fair; where, assisted by his accomplices, he prevailed upon her to drink away her caution. In the confusion of the crowd, and the obscurity of the twilight, he found little difficulty in separating her from her party, and carrying her off, whether conscious or unconscious of her destina-





tion. After this, if the father did not choose to comply with his terms, he sent his victim home, with a ruined character. In this recital we have distinctly before us the connecting link between an odd but generally harmless custom, and the violent and brutish abductions in other parts of the country. The interested nature of the transaction, even in this district is proved by a remark of my informant, that the farmer's daughter mentioned above ran no risk of being sent back, having taken the precaution of carrying a fifty pound bank note with her.

I passed another of O'Cahan's castles by the road side, but rudely built, and uninteresting. The scenery, however, became still more picturesque as I approached Londonderry; and at length the city appeared, in its finest aspect, that of an island (as it seemed from this distance) in the midst of the Foyle, surrounded by battlemented walls, and piled up with houses, rising towards the centre, the whole surmounted by a single lofty spire. The view annexed is taken from a different point; but it exhibits distinctly a very important feature in the picture, the long and very handsome wooden bridge. The fortifications consist of an earthen rampart faced with stone, and strengthened with bastions. Within there are four main streets, with lanes diverging; the main streets being entered through archways.

Outside are suburbs of a less distinguished character, for inside the walls, the greater part of the town is built on a scale of high respectability.

Londonderry is a thriving town, and the inhabitants have just the appearance which might be expected. They are business-like people, and have the air of knowing what they are about. I observed, with a little amusement, the desolate condition of a showman, who, by some unfortunate mistake, had here pitched his caravan. In vain he shouted, in vain he thumped his drum, in vain he paraded his corps dramatique : no one even turned his head to look as he passed by. At eight o'clock in the evening, I walked round the ramparts, a delightful promenade, rendered at the time as light as day by means of numerous lamps, but I did not encounter a human being. Londonderry is in fact a very respectable town, and its inhabitants are very respectable people ; but, since I have, on the present occasion, but little to do with business details, I may be excused for continuing my journey with as brief delay as possible.

## CHAPTER XI.

Strabane—Stranorlan—Gap of Barnosmore—Singularity of the Country—Donegal—Description of the Old Castle—Theatrical aspect of the Bay—Pilgrimage to Lough Dergh—Route to Ballyshannon—Lough Erne—Travelling Exaggerations—Devenish Island—Enniskillen.

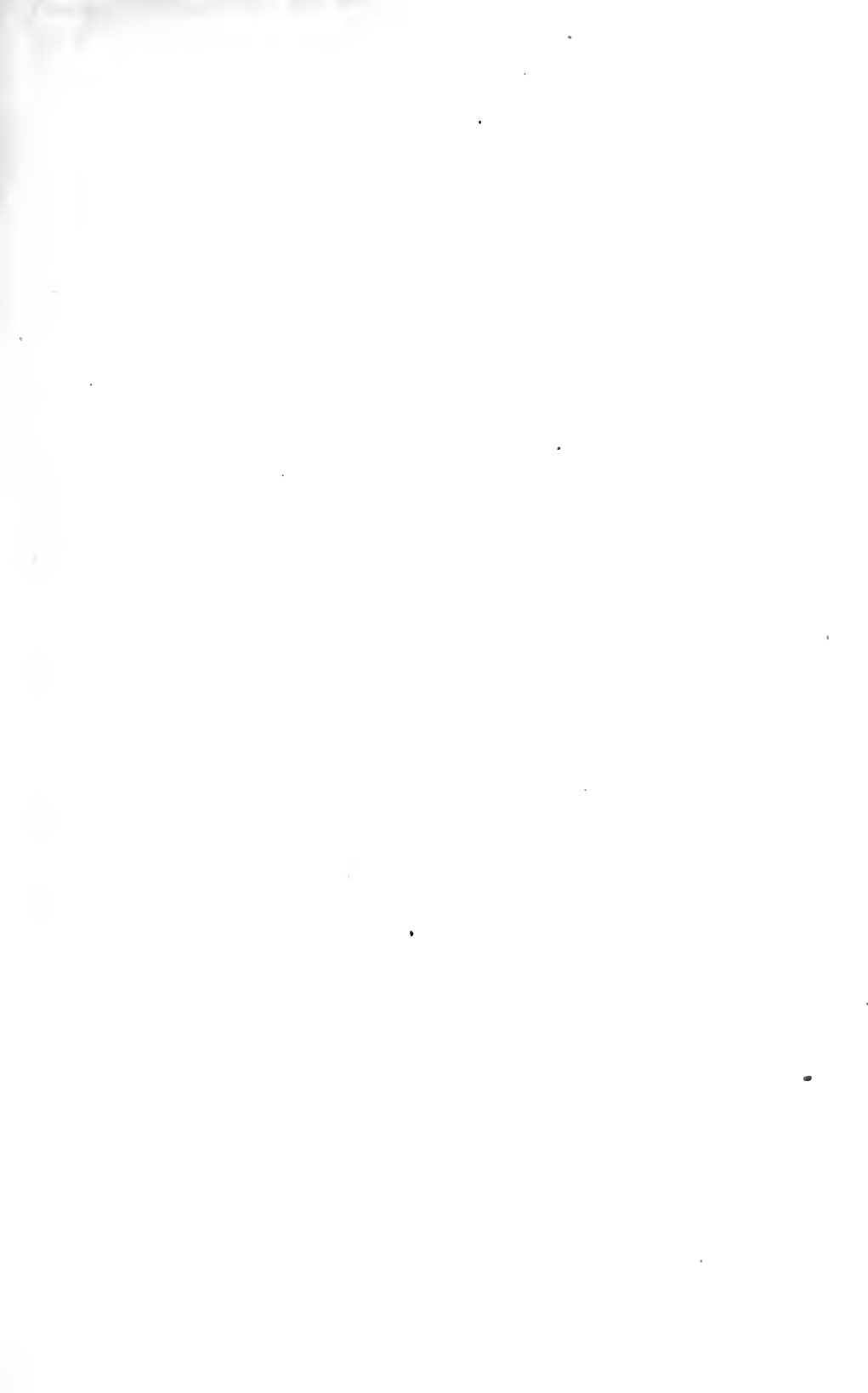
LEAVING Londonderry, I found the country for some little distance of nearly the same pleasing character, which is to me the only charm of that great bulwark of protestantism. This did not continue long, however, and after a comparatively uninteresting ride of fourteen miles, I reached Strabane; a most confusedly built, and somewhat unsightly town, but populous and substantial. Hitherto I had pursued my journey without any attention to method; now walking, now riding, now mounting a mail-car for a few miles, now hiring a conveyance of my own, and now breaking my compact with the driver, and not meeting him till he had reached his place of destination, where it was necessary for me to look after my baggage.

But at Strabane, finding that there was little game for such a sportsman as myself to be expected on the road—or, at least, little that could not be brought down flying—I mounted the Sligo mail. This coach, from Strabane to Donegal, where I alighted, I am enabled to say is, without any exception, the worst horsed vehicle in all Ireland.

The scenery was occasionally pretty till after we had passed the little town of Stranorlan—where, by the same token there was a large cattle fair going on in the street, and, among the crowd, the identical young girl whom the reader will see on the opposite page. She is a “rich” but not a “rare” specimen of what in England would be a market girl, although in Ireland the young lady is in all probability the daughter of a small farmer. It would seem to be hardly time to expect a change in physiognomy, for we are still in the north; but certainly the glowing eyes of the true natives begin at this place to mingle with the wary and yet tranquil orbs of the settlers of King James. At the fair the people were, with hardly an exception, respectably clothed.

Soon after the hum of the fair had died upon my ear, the country began insensibly to assume a wild and dreary aspect. We climbed an ascent, which, although not steep, appeared interminable. The cultivated fields dwindled into patches of green or yellow, daubed here and there upon a dark heather ground; and at length the traces of human industry







altogether ceased, and we found ourselves in the domain of nature. Nothing could be more cheerless than the earth—nothing more gloomy than the sky, which appeared to clasp rather than overhang it. A lonely tarn, grey and motionless, lay before us; and on its banks stood a single hut. Behind these, forming the back ground of the picture, were the round heads of two hills, booming hazily through a thin veil of clouds, and between them the road was lost in what appeared to be some measureless and mysterious gulf. This defile is called the Gap of Barnosmore.

Just before entering the pass, there is a small ruin on the right, only interesting from its situation. Viewed from the road, it seems to be the roofless remains of a small square house, possessing nothing of the castellated form. It was built, however, it is said, in King James's time, to guard the defile; and in this dreary habitation the Hugonot Rapin wrote his unreadable history.

On entering the gorge of the hills, I did not find myself in the narrow and perilous pass I had expected from the exterior. The sides, indeed, were steep and rugged, but the area between was rather a valley than a chasm. Still this very extent added to the idea of desolation, which was farther increased by the appearance of one or two huts of the most wretched kind. Altogether I think the Gap of Barnosmore worthy of its reputation as

a picture, provided it is seen from its northern entrance. A traveller coming from the south, like Mr. Inglis, will be disappointed, and perhaps, like him, be inclined to vent his chagrin upon the guide books.

On emerging from the pass, cultivation returned by degrees. The huts were still wretched, but with, here and there, a neat cottage interspersed ; till at length the appearance of comfort became predominant. The country around Donegal is highly cultivated, and the surface of so singular a character as to make one imagine it at first to be the contrivance of human taste or caprice. It is studded with circular mounds, of various sizes, but all regularly formed ; and as these were covered with grain, in every stage of ripeness, the effect of the variety of such masses of colour was novel and brilliant.

Donegal is a small town, of a most countrified appearance, set down near a nook of the bay. It consists of a triangular market-place of tolerable houses, and some lines of cottages extending from it. The inn is in the triangle ; and I had therefore an opportunity of inspecting the interior commerce of the town ; which consisted, during the best hours of the forenoon, of the sale and purchase, in small lots, of an ass's load of potatoes. The place, of course, is very poor ; and the beggars so numerous that the shopkeepers have entered into an agree-

ment with each other to give charity only once a week. Monday is the relieving day fixed by this Poor Law.

The only attraction to the tourist in Donegal is the old castle, once the residence of the O'Donnells. This ruin stands on the margin of the river, and is somewhat peculiar in form. It is inclosed by the river on one side, and on the others by an almost semicircular wall, where was probably the entrance. The edifice consists of an oblong building of three stories, and a vast pile of five stories, connected with the northern end of the former at right angles. The oblong has now neither roof nor floor above the ground ; but its windows (of the square gothic kind) and chimneys are sufficiently entire. The square pile is composed, on the ground floor, of a vast vaulted apartment ; from one corner of which rises a narrow spiral staircase, communicating with what was, no doubt, the banquetting hall, by a small arched door-way of sculptured stone. The principal access to this story, however, seems to have been by a stair ascending from the interior of the oblong building. There are now no vestiges of the steps, but the door-way into the hall, which is arched with cut stone, is entire.

The hall appears to have been a magnificent room, with a noble bay window at one end, and an immense chimney, richly adorned with the O'Donnell arms, and other sculpture. The chimney is not in the middle of the wall, but nearer the bay

window ; while at the other end there is a smaller chimney, which leads one to suppose that that which seems now one vast apartment was formerly divided into a larger and a smaller one. The rooms above, being without floor or roof can be distinguished only by their windows and chimneys.

There is no door-way leading directly into the square pile, which may be called the keep. One with a Saxon arch—the only specimen of this arch in the edifice—enters the oblong building close by the keep, and was intended no doubt to communicate with the vaulted story ; but another, and evidently the principal entrance, is situated near the farther end of the same building, so that the guests going to the banquetting hall would have to pass through a suite of rooms. Upon the whole this is one of the most beautiful ruins of the kind I have seen.

At the end of the oblong, opposite to the keep, there is another mass of buildings, of which it is impossible to tell what was the extent ; although, from the less careful architecture, it is probable that they contained the offices and servants' rooms. In the annexed beautiful view, the spectator is supposed to stand on the opposite side of a bridge, which here spans the river.

On the other side of the town, and on the shores of the bay, there are some confused remains of an abbey of the fifteenth century, founded by an O'Donnell. In this direction the situation of the town is more distinctly seen. It stands in the







innermost nook of the bay, which appears to be separated from the broader water by a group of the circular mounds I have described. They rise gracefully swelling from the surface of the land, the base of one being in general connected with that of another ; and the sea is not visible behind them. This gives a singular and beautiful air to the picture ; and the scenic effect is wonderfully increased when you see a vessel, in full sail, passing between two of the little, richly-coloured hills. Nothing can be more *theatrical*.

It was my intention, while at Donegal, to have made an excursion to Pettigo, for the purpose of visiting Lough Dergh ; but, understanding it was too late in the season for the famous pilgrimage to Patrick's Purgatory, the period for which ends on the 15th of August, I determined to pursue my journey to Ballyshannon. For the advantage, however, of travellers who may be more fortunate than myself, in regard to time, I shall extract from the "Northern Tourist" a brief account of the doings they may expect to witness ; only premising that the Lough, about nine miles in circumference, is situated in a most dreary solitude, surrounded by bleak and barren hills.

"The island to which the pilgrims resort, and which lies about half a mile from the shore, is of very limited dimensions, rising a little above the level of the lake, and presenting altogether a barren, forbidding aspect. It is covered with modern

buildings, six in number, fitted up, for the most part, as places of worship, and each one dedicated to some particular saint: in the vicinity of these are a number of circular stone walls, from one to two feet in height, inclosing broken stone or wooden crosses, which are called saints' beds; and, around these, on the hard and pointed rocks, the penitents pass upon their bare knees, repeating a certain form of prayer at each. They then visit the chapels, where they remain night and day, performing certain ceremonies, and saying a prescribed number of prayers, which are in proportion to the amount or degree of crime committed. The pilgrim, while engaged in these rites, which generally occupy several days, is allowed to partake of but one meal of bread and water in the twenty-four hours; and while in the prison, in which the individual continues a day and a night previous to quitting the island, food of any description is prohibited. Twenty-four priests are appointed to this place, each officiating for one hour at a time.

“The pilgrims are kept awake at night by a man appointed for the purpose, who, with a small switch or rod, gently taps any one he may perceive disposed to slumber. On the spot upon which the little chapel dedicated to St. Patrick now stands, there is a rock, in which was formerly a cave, capable of holding six or eight persons, where it was believed the pains and torments that await the wicked in another world might be experienced by

those who entered it; and which Sir James Ware, in his *Antiquities*, attempts to prove, was hollowed out by Ulysses, while sojourning in this spot, to enable him to hold converse with some of the inhabitants of the infernal regions. This was the last place visited by the penitents, and in this they had to remain all night. From its closeness, and from want of sufficient air, many persons from time to time lost their lives in it, while others were deprived of their senses. In consequence of which, in the year 1630, it was suppressed by order of the Lords Justices, who had it laid open to public view, and the whole affair exposed. It was, however, during the reign of James II., again resorted to as a place of penance, and a new cave hollowed out of the rock; and it remained so till about the year 1780, when it was closed up by order of the prior, who considered it dangerous on account of the number of persons who crowded into it at once, that they might, by the sufferings they endured in it, escape the torments to be inflicted in another world. The chapel, dedicated to St. Patrick, which is called the Prison-house, is now substituted for this cave.

“It is almost incredible what crowds visit this island annually during the months of June, July, and August; it being no unusual thing to see from 900 to 1300 persons, of both sexes, upon it at one and the same time—an extraordinary circumstance, when it is considered that the island does not

measure more than three hundred paces in any direction. They are ferried across in a boat, which can carry seventy or eighty persons at once, for which they are charged sixpence halfpenny each; and yet so inadequate is this conveyance to the purpose, that the shores of the lake are frequently covered with persons waiting their turn—the greater number of whom have arrived from very distant places, many from England, some from France, and others all the way from America. It has been justly observed by an intelligent writer, that a painter who wished to make a drawing of the river Styx, the ferryman and his boat, with the groups of expectant shadows on the banks, could not find a better bodying forth of that imaginary scene than is presented by Lough Dergh. The island has, in comparatively recent times, been rendered notorious by a sermon preached in its favour by Pope Benedict XIV.; and, in the course of the present year, an advertisement has appeared in the public papers, from a Roman Catholic Bishop, stating his intention of holding a station in it during the present season. Some years since, in consequence of the number of persons who had crowded into the boat, it was upset, when the majority of the unfortunate individuals met a watery grave.”

On leaving Donegal for Ballyshannon, nothing for some distance could be more beautiful, or, to my eyes, more original, than the aspect of the





country. The singular mounds, rich with all kinds of vegetation, and the harvest colours of the fields from which, though uncommon in themselves, they rose with a natural swell, gave a touch of the fantastic to mere beauty, which heightened its effect. A change at length took place, but softly and gradually. The dark mountains of Sligo, with the magnificent headland of Benbulbin, hove into sight; and, looking backwards, all traces of the fairy hills had disappeared so completely, that I was tempted to exclaim,

“The earth hath bubbles as the water hath,  
And these are of them.”

Ballyshannon appeared a dozen miles off, the space between resembling a vast plain: but this was an optical illusion of a very common kind; for, on descending into the plain, it changed into a series of low hills, on one of which the town stood. To the right were numerous sand-hills, and extensive tracts of sand stretching along the sea.

Of Ballyshannon I have nothing to say; but Mr. Creswick, the reader will perceive, is eloquent on the subject. Except in point of situation, in fact, the town is altogether uninteresting: and, although its salmon fisheries are important, we had enough of that sport at Coleraine.

I was now desirous of seeing Lough Erne, so ce-

lebrated for its beauty ; and the best way to do this completely is to seat oneself on the top of the mail-coach for Enniskillen. The road runs along the edge of the water almost the entire distance, and the traveller has a better opportunity of observing at least the lower lake than when floating on its bosom. For some time we journeyed on by the side of a most uninteresting stream, which I was told was the lake. The land on either side was a mere heath, with here and there cottages as miserable as any I have seen in the Bog of Allen. This, however, was by and by at an end ; for the river widened into a lake, and the hills on the right hand became bolder and loftier. Still I profess myself to have been altogether unable to discover on what the reputation of Lough Erne rests. It possesses, no doubt, the softness of shading that must belong to a large sheet of water, situated in a tract of country which is, generally speaking, without rugged, or otherwise remarkable features ; but even in this respect it is eclipsed by several both of the Scottish and English lakes. There are some fine points of view, and some beautifully wooded islands, but this is all I can say. The islands at length become so numerous that the traveller cannot fail to be struck with the truth of a remark which has been applied to the lake—that it looks like a country laid under water.

I confess, however, that Lough Erne would, in all probability, have appeared more beautiful to



me, had not its beauties been so grossly exaggerated. But, such as they are, I fear next year's visitors will see still fewer of them than I did, the islands of a considerable portion of the lower lake being sentenced to lose their trees. That these trees are not in themselves, as wood, of great importance, may be collected from the fact, that they have been bought by a Birmingham house, chiefly for the purpose of making women's *clogs*. Within a mile or two of Enniskillen is Devenish Island, which may be described as a large grassy knoll, without tree or shrub. Here, however, is interest enough without the picturesque; the whole soil of the island being holy ground to the antiquarian.

Near the summit are the ruins of an abbey, dedicated to St. Mary; and below, a church, dedicated to St. Molush. There are also a Gothic building, called St. Molush's House, and a stone trough sunk into the ground, called St. Molush's Bed; and last, not least, a Round Tower, which, as I have observed in last year's volume, is usually, if not always found—when it is found at all—by the side of Christian antiquities. “The abbey,” says a writer in the *Belfast Magazine*, “is built of black marble, a material not used in any other edifice on the island; and it seems, from its style of architecture, to be of more modern date than any of them. A stranger is greatly struck on passing under the fine Gothic arch of the transept, still in excel-

lent preservation, by the sharpness of all the lines of the work, which are so highly polished, and so perfect as to seem fresh from the chisel of the workman."

Stanihurst accounts for the formation of Lough Erne by the following tradition. A woman came one day to a holy well which was on the spot, and after she had finished her devotions, instead of covering down the lid, she turned away to still her child, who cried. Her omission to cover the well, which should have been done instantaneously, was fatal; for, in returning, in a fright, to redeem her error, she was met by the water, and drowned in the inundation which took place. Our author adds, that this story is the more probable, from the fact, that fishermen, in a sunny day, perceive distinctly various towers and steeples under the transparent wave.

Annexed is a view, presenting the Lower Lake, near Ballyshannon, in its most favourable aspect.

The Upper and Lower Lake are connected by a comparatively narrow channel; and, in the middle of this channel, there is an island, on which stands Enniskillen. The situation of the town, therefore, is fine. It is a busy, bustling place, which enjoys a considerable traffic; but there is no object in the interior which can detain the steps of the traveller.

## CHAPTER XII.

Singular boundaries of Leitrim and Sligo—Situation of Sligo—Effect of colour on the picture—Sligo during the pestilence—Business of the town—Advantage derived from the Scottish banking system—Library—Lands and Rents—Condition of the People on the western coast—Anecdote—Road to Boyle—Stupidity of the Peasants—The Shannon—The Deserted Village—Athlone and its Anarchy—Personal adventure.

I LEFT Emmiskillen for Sligo, and, till we reached Manor Hamilton, found the road perfectly uninteresting. This is a wretched place, only distinguished by the dreary and extensive ruins of a castle. The country now began to improve; and, by and by, about the boundaries of Leitrim and Sligo, it presented an aspect not less curious than picturesque.

Had it not been full day-light, with a clear atmosphere, I could have supposed myself to be on the frontiers of a country defended by fortresses. The immense masses of rock, among which the road wound, appeared to be crowned with castles,

the grey walls of which rose from the summit as perpendicularly as if they had been built by the square and plummet. Sometimes the resemblance was rendered more complete by round towers, strengthening the angles of the courtine walls. This extraordinary scene continued for some time, till at length, having passed the warlike boundary, we were fairly admitted into the county Sligo, and to the view of its unique and magnificent bay.

The town of Sligo, except for a little space towards the sea, is girded round by a chain of lofty hills, of which Knocknarea on one hand, and Benbulbin on the other, form the two terminations. But what constitutes the peculiarity of the landscape, is not the height of these hills, but their outline, which is only rivalled in savage grandeur by some of the mountains of Scotland. There are only four passes into the amphitheatre formed by this remarkable range. The bottom of the amphitheatre, where the town stands, is one mass of the richest verdure, only diversified by a lake, which, for softness of shading, and all the other attributes of quiet beauty, is not surpassed even in this beautiful country. Lough Gill is only six or seven miles long; but, to my taste, it is infinitely finer than its gigantic neighbour, Lough Erne.

One great component part of beauty is colour; and, fine as are the features of the scene before us, I attribute a considerable portion of their effect to the rich and brilliant hues with which nature is here

adorned. In this region Ireland is truly the Emerald isle. All is vivid, all is sparkling to the eye; and the dark mountains, which form the setting of the gem, only increase its lustre by the contrast. Nothing can be richer than the waving fields of Sligo—nothing more beautiful than the undulations of which they form the surface. But—(alas, that there should be a but!) the bounties which nature bestows upon the vegetable kingdom are not always conducive to the welfare of those who inherit it; and the almost perpetual rains, which here keep the face of the soil for ever fresh and fair, are far from operating in a similar manner upon its inhabitants. At those times when the country is visited by contagion, this paradise of beauty, in consequence, I have no doubt, of the extreme humidity of the atmosphere, is a perfect lazaret-house of disease.

The Asiatic pestilence, which raged some years ago in Europe under the name of cholera, threatened to depopulate Sligo; and the precautions which it became necessary to observe by the surrounding country, almost deprived the inhabitants of every gleam of hope. A line was drawn round the devoted town, beyond which there was no escape; and those who attempted to fly were driven back, as if into a grave. Nothing was heard in the streets but sounds of lamentations and despair. Even the phenomena of external nature served for omens and predictions of evil. Some flashes of

lightning had heralded the approach of the angel of the pestilence ; but during his sojourn, a heavy cloud brooded over the town. Not a ray of sunshine was visible by day, and not a star by night.

At this juncture men naturally reverted to those feelings of religion which before were dimmed or deadened by the seductions of the world ; and every hour of every day they found the Refuge open for their admission, and the servants of the sanctuary at their post. Catholic, protestant, dissenter—all were alike the ministers of God. On this great day of judgment, there was not one priest of any denomination who shrunk from his perilous duty. Wherever their presence was required, there they took their stand—at the foot of the altar—at the bed of the dying—by the side of the new made grave. Every heart confessed that death was not the master, but the agent of the dispensation ; for, rising high above the sound of his footsteps, as he passed through the houses, came a voice from the many-portalled temple of the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming, “ Come to me, and I will give you life !”

During the period of this visitation, only one clergyman—a baptist minister—lost his life ; while the physicians of the body were nearly all swept off. Besides these two classes, the authorities of the town did their duty well and bravely. Mr. Fausset, the provost, rode in every morning from the security of his country-house, with as great

regularity as if all had been well, to visit the hospitals, bury the dead, preserve order in the streets, and take his seat as president of the Board of Health. In spite of his unrelaxing labours, he one morning, on reaching the town, saw the grounds of the Fever Hospital covered with unburied corpses ; —and then, as he expressed it to me himself, he felt as if the end of the world were indeed come.

The Board of Health consisted at first of twelve members, who were rapidly diminished to seven. Nearly their whole duty at last was to grant coffins and tarred sheets for the dead bodies, and to see that the stock of those materials was kept up. One day two poor little boys came to beg a coffin for their mother ; and the provost, struck by their forlorn appearance, asked why their father had not come, who would have been better able to carry it ? “ We buried our father yesterday, Sir,” was the reply.

According to the best observers here, the disease was both infectious and contagious. It showed no respect of persons : the rich and the poor shared the same fate—the old and young, the sober and dissipated, the strong and feeble. I know an old lady, ninety years of age, still alive, and well enough to have remembered me after an interval of a dozen years, whose coffin was made, and the tarred sheet brought into the room to wrap round her body.

During the interval I have mentioned, Sligo has

at least doubled its business, and it may therefore be considered one of the most flourishing towns in Ireland. Before my visit, a dozen years ago, there was no bank ; now there are *four*. But this is too much of a good thing ; and, after having experienced the benefits of the banking system, Sligo may look for a fair proportion of its evils. If the four offices do even a moderate business each, a false capital must be set afloat ; and we all know that the activity produced by such means is like the energy of intoxication, which gives place in due time to lassitude, exhaustion, and repentance. The notary for all these four banks informed me, that sometimes he was not called upon to protest a single bill for several weeks at a time ; but this is no evidence of commercial health in Ireland. There a simple notice of nonpayment is all that is necessary, and, generally speaking, all that is customary ; while the system of *renewals* is carried on to an extent that is but little known in England.

It cannot be denied, however, that the first bank established here, a branch of the Provincial Bank of Ireland, has done much good. The Scottish plan of lending money on good security, or opening what are technically called cash credit accounts, was exactly what Ireland wanted. It did not introduce proximately new capital into the country, but it put into activity the dormant capital already existing. The effects of this are strikingly visible in the rising fortunes of more than one country gentle-



man in the neighbourhood whom I could name. The establishment of these banks throughout the country, I look upon as the greatest step that has been taken in my time towards the advancement of Ireland in wealth and civilization. Dublin is no longer the centre and reservoir of every thing valuable. People are able to look at home even for loans of money ; and the advantages of a metropolis are distributed over the whole kingdom. But it must not be supposed that Dublin falls in anything like the same proportion that the provinces rise—the necessity of which I have heard asserted by superficial reasoners. The benefits derived from the country banks would not, in many cases, have been enjoyed at all but for them ; and thus they may be said to promote the prosperity of the country, without otherwise materially injuring the capital, than by destroying its metropolitan prestige.

A dozen years ago a circulating library had been attempted in Sligo, but failed for want of readers : now there is a public library, on a very respectable footing, kept in a neat and commodious house. The English reader will smile at this boast respecting a wealthy and flourishing town ; but there are not above two or three towns in all Ireland which have the like to say. Even in Sligo the new library is not in a very healthy state ; and when the fact is considered, that there are no good schools for the upper classes in the town, this will not appear sur-

prising. The mania for a Dublin or a foreign education, however, will no doubt subside by degrees ; and each Irish town of respectability will pride itself on instilling into its inhabitants a taste for reading, and on being able to supply them with books to gratify it. For the other classes there is a National school ; but it is in effect a Catholic school, since no Protestant will enter it. The Irish *monomania*, I need not add, is almost at its height in Sligo.

Mr. Inglis has made one or two mistakes respecting this district. The rent of land is by no means exorbitant ; the usual amount, with the exception, of course, of the town parks, being thirty shillings an Irish acre. Mr. Wynne is rather an indolent than a bad landlord ; and, however high he may keep his nominal rent-roll, no one accuses him of attempting to realize it by means of cruelty or oppression. He is one of those individuals who have benefited by the introduction of the Scottish banking system ; and the fact is apparent on his estate.

Very differently is Lord Palmerston situated, of whose property Mr. Inglis gives so glowing an account. If his lordship had still more capital to spend, and still more inclination to spend it for the good of the country, it would take a life-time to bring his tenantry even to a par with those of Mr. Wynne. His lands lie chiefly on the sea-coast, between Sligo and Ballyshannon ; a wild and barren district, where the Dartery mountains are washed

by the Atlantic, and where, in many places, the natives have hardly any pretensions to the name of civilized beings. Some persons argue that the misery of the people on this coast proceeds from their own laziness ; and one gentleman related to me the following anecdote in support of this opinion. I, on the other hand, repeat it in support of mine, that the evil arises from the almost brutal ignorance which prevails in such districts. I must premise, however, that I do not remember whether the transaction in question took place on Lord Palmerston's estate ; although it would hardly be injustice to give it a local habitation in almost any part of the western shore.

A gentleman, as my informer told me, commiserating the condition of the people, who patiently endured the pangs of hunger when the sea before them teemed with wholesome and delicious food, purchased a boat for the purpose of making an experiment. He invited some of the most destitute among them to accompany him to the fishing, promising, in return for their share of the labour, to give them a due share of what they caught. They refused to labour without wages ; and, after in vain endeavouring to make them comprehend that his offer was much better than the ordinary rate of payment, he added to the chance of the fishing a day's wages. On this they consented. The fishing was completely successful ; and, in addition to supplying their families with abundance of excel-

lent food, they made some money by selling what remained. This was all their benefactor wanted. His experiment had succeeded; for it had convinced the people that they were able, by their own industry, to make a comfortable and independent subsistence.

“I lend you my boat,” said he, “till you are able to purchase one for yourselves. Go, and make a good use of it: be industrious, and be happy.”

“*But the day’s wages?*” cried they.

“The day’s wages!” Argument was vain: they demanded a day’s wages as before, and would not stir without. Their benefactor gave up his attempt in shame and sorrow, and the unhappy savages returned to their hunger and their despair.

The usual excursions from Sligo are to Lough Gill, to the top of Knochnarea, which commands an extensive view of the coast and the ocean, and to the Glen, a deep chasm at the bottom of this hill. Within the town are the ruins of an abbey of the fifteenth century, exhibiting sculptures of some interest to the antiquary. The only excursion I was able to make myself, on the present occasion, was to Willsboro’, the seat of Mr. Fausset, who renewed the kind and hospitable attentions for which I was deeply indebted to him, and most of the other gentlemen of Sligo, a dozen years ago.

All I have to add respecting the town is, that it

contains several good inns; but, to the lovers of home-comfort, I recommend the York Hotel, in Jail Street, kept by a respectable family of five ladies, who exert all the tact which is native to their sex in ministering to the comfort of the traveller.

I have little to say respecting the road between Sligo and Athlone. After leaving such scenery behind, the first thing which appeared in any way remarkable was the mountainous descent into Boyle. This took place in the dark; and, owing to the abrupt turns of the road, it was not unattended with danger. One peculiarity in the peasantry, which I had frequently observed before, was here very striking. When ascending a hill at night with their horse and cart, they cannot be brought to shout when they hear a coach thundering down upon them. They continue tugging in silence at their horse, to get him out of the way; and the driver of the descending vehicle has no notice of their presence till a collision appears almost inevitable. But they are not the only obstacle in the path; for an Irish peasant never thinks of throwing aside, when he has done with it, the stone which he puts behind the wheel of his cart. There it lies for the benefit of the next comer; and, being about ten times larger than there is any occasion for, the traveller is always sure of enjoying a smart concussion, if it should fail of overturning his carriage.

The town of Boyle, its river, its ruined abbey, and its inn, are all perfectly respectable, but not so striking as to deserve remark in a journey so fertile in the beautiful and the extraordinary. At Carrick on Shannon I fell in with the celebrated river which I hope will one day roll over golden sands. The Shannon here appeared to me in the likeness of a succession of lakes little better than marshes. The whole district, in fact, during the rainy season, looks like a marsh here and there reclaimed. Lough Allen, which lies to the north of this, enjoys the reputation of being the parent of the Shannon; but a late writer, the author of a "Journey to Kilkea," will have it that the *Shannon Pot* is the true source. The Shannon Pot lies in a valley, between the Cailleagh and Surganacallagh mountains in the county Cavan, and is a pot of very convenient size. "The source, or spring, is of a circular form, about fifty feet in diameter, called the Shannon Pot, or, more generally, Seigmons-head. It boils up in the centre, and a continued stream flows from it of about eight feet wide and two deep, in the driest season, and runs four miles an hour."

Jamestown is distinguished by a curious old gate, which serves as the entrance to the town, a single street of mean houses. Drumsna, on the other hand, is neat and more modern. Longford would be an excellent town anywhere, but it is not picturesque; and here I embarked for Ballymahon in the canal boat, in which I had an uninteresting sail

through a flat country. At Ballymahon, which is rather a considerable town, without any individuality, I hired a car for Athlone; and, by the way, amused myself with looking at the place where Goldsmith's house is *not*. Near the road is a ruin of considerable size, resembling a farm-house of three stories, with outhouses; and this is supposed to have been the minister's abode. There is also a church on the top of the hill, and an alehouse by the way-side, with a short thick pillar of stones marking the place where the hawthorn was. Notwithstanding these things, however, I cannot say that I was able to identify the spot in imagination with the neighbourhood of the

“ — loveliest village of the plain.”

Auburn, and all its appliances, were English, not Irish; and there is something—I had almost said, in the very atmosphere of Ireland peculiar to the country. Upon the whole, the admirers of the “Deserted Village,” who would keep their associations pure and poetical, had better leave this Yarrow unvisited.

Athlone I found to be an irregularly built, confused, huddled, but withal substantial-looking town. The Shannon runs through the middle, the two sides being connected by a narrow, antique bridge. On the right bank are the citadel and

barracks ; and as boats cannot ascend the rapids of the Shannon, this side is formed into an island by a canal for their passage, over which are two bridges. Notwithstanding the inconvenient form of the old bridge, the market is held on the island ; and the scene of confusion presented—which I had the good fortune to witness—is without parallel in Ireland, or, I believe, in Europe.

The peasants flocked over, as they usually do, like a herd of bullocks ; but with this difference, that they, unlike their cattle, had neither dogs nor men to direct and control them. The narrow way was barricadoed by several carts, which lay there without horses ; and, after standing for half an hour up to my ancles in mud, endeavouring here and there to insinuate myself between the carts, and under the horses' heads, sometimes with, and sometimes without success, I was fain to return as I had come, being informed that the stoppage would in all probability continue for several hours. I chanced to stand near a gentleman, apparently an unconcerned spectator like myself, who, addressing me with a smile, remarked—"This is a strange scene, Sir !" The gentleman was one of the magistrates of Athlone ! I saw, also, some of the police in the crowd, making the best of their way through it, and leaving every body else to do the same.

On returning to the inn I was informed that there were still more impatient travellers than my-



self on the other side of the bridge. The agent of the Galway coach had that morning waited on the magistrates, to request that they would order the police to clear a passage, the coach being just expected ; and the reply of these worthy functionaries was, "We have nothing to do with it ; you must manage as you can." The coach in the meantime had arrived, and was now waiting till the tumult should think proper to quell itself—a consummation which was not destined to take place for nearly two hours.

You cannot walk in the streets of Athlone : you must wade. So inconceivably dirty a place does not exist in Europe, and the broad streets are as filthy as the narrow ones. On my return from the bridge, I walked up the main street, through which the country carts were crowding, four abreast, two on the causeway, and one on each trottoir ; and it may be imagined that, even by tacking from side to side, and creeping under the horses' necks, I made but slow progress. I understand that the actual governor of the town is very generously, though by no means *justly* rewarded for his negligence or incapacity.

A new bridge has been talked of for some years ; but I fear there is no chance of the plan being carried into execution. The commerce of the river seemed to me to be nearly confined to turf ; but I heard that considerable quantities of corn were exported. The town, indeed, stands in the midst of

a vast granary; and there is no reason why it should not do well.

Some time before, and some time after the abortive attempt I have mentioned, I succeeded in wading across the bridge, and the trouble was well repaid. The citadel stands in the middle of this section of the town, and is one of the most beautiful little fortresses I ever saw either at home or abroad. Its walls are of immense strength, and are fortified by round towers at the angles. Ascending an inclined plane, I crossed a drawbridge, which appeared to have fallen into disuse, and entered the gate. The buildings around are of no distinction; but the keep in the middle, a regular polygon of great strength, is very fine. Cannons point in all directions into the streets; and, in case of insurrection, this section of the town could be laid in ruins in a very short time. Since an affray between the townspeople and the garrison, there is a regulation that no person should be allowed to enter the citadel without a pass-ticket, but this I did not learn till after my visit. I walked through the place, addressing the soldiers, and one of the officers, without being questioned.

A larger and more commodious barrack stands close by the citadel. On the other side of the bridge are some uninteresting ruins of the cathedral, and a fragment of the ancient walls, covered with ivy.

Unluckily I did not finish my survey of the town by daylight; and, when prowling about in the dark,

I was knocked down by some one of the inhabitants, who came behind, and struck me so earnest a blow on the back of the head with a bludgeon, that my hat was cut through, as if with a knife. This compliment, which was followed by several others when I was down, I have reason to believe, was intended for one of the officers of the garrison, and I hope the gentleman will excuse me for intercepting it. The people at the inn were kind enough to advise me to go to bed, and send for a doctor; but I understood too much of surgery to comply. I took the former half of the advice, however, together with a glass of whisky and water; and, notwithstanding a very respectable loss of blood, a ride to Shannon Harbour, the next morning, set all right again.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Specimen of an Irish Blunder—Shannon Harbour—Singular Rules of the Canal-boat—Characteristics of the Shannon—Banagher—Ruins of Meelick Abbey—Portumna—The Fair—The Irish Jig—Physiognominal Notices—Lough Derg—Killaloe—Rapids of the Shannon—Castle Cornwall—The treacherous Guest—To Limerick.

AFTER all I left Athlone in good humour, having been regaled, instead of breakfast, which I was hardly comfortable enough to eat, with a genuine specimen of an Irish blunder. While dressing, I called the waiter, and said to him—

“Waiter, I have broken the string of my waist-coat: Pray, borrow a pin for me from the chamber-maid.”

“A pin, Sir?” he replied, “I will, Sir—is it a *wroiting* pin, Sir?” This sentence contains as full a description, and explanation, of the Irish blunder as could be written in a volume. An Irishman blunders because he is too quick. His wits travel too fast, and overshoot the mark. He catches, or imagines he catches, your meaning, but does not

make sure that he has done so by comparing the parts of the communication. If you ask a *pin*, he does not take time to consider that at the moment you are standing with the broken parts of your dress in your hand which a pin is required to fasten; and still less does he imagine that there is any connexion between the chambermaid from whom he is to ask it and this instrument. He is thinking of making out your bill, or of sending a challenge, or of feather-beds, or wild geese, or nothing at all at all—and he flies to bring you a *writing pin*, Sir.

After a pleasant ride I arrived at Shannon Harbour, where the traveller is struck by the mighty size of the inn. This, I fear, is another example of an Irish blunder. “The passengers by the canal from Dublin are very numerous,” reasoned the projector, “and of course we must have an hotel of proportionable size to receive them.” He did not consider that there is nothing in Shannon Harbour to detain these passengers; who immediately on their arrival embark in the steamboat, where they are supplied not only with lodging but provisions, while all the time they are progressing on their journey. Some of the regulations of the Dublin canal boats are really curious, and worth transcribing.

“FIRST CABIN.—Wine sold only in pints or half-pints—and not more than one pint to each person. A noggin of spirits, or half a noggin of

spirits and half a pint of wine, allowed to each gentleman after dinner or supper-time : such allowance of spirits not extended to ladies, or wine or spirits to children under *ten* years ; nor is the allowance of wine or spirits of one person, without his or her express desire, to be transferred to another.

“SECOND CABIN.—No more than two bottles of porter, ale, or cider, or one bottle of any two of them, allowed to each male passenger, and one of any of them to each female, throughout the journey ; and any passenger bringing liquor into the boat, and using it, to forfeit his passage.”

These regulations are either a frightfully true index to the state of society, or an insult to the Irish nation, for which the perpetrators should be dragged through their own canal.

Hitherto the Shannon had resembled more a vast collection of bog water than a mighty river. This, I fear, will be considered by the Irish ladies a still greater insult than circumscribing, as the canal people do, their potations of whisky ; but a man who speaks the truth must lay his account with sometimes being thought impertinent. The Shannon, I repeat, so far as I had pursued it—commencing in swamps, now flowing in a fine volume, and now inundating the country—seemed to me to possess none of the characteristics of a great river. The soil was in general nearly on a level with its surface ; and the hills in the neighbourhood

were low. Its colour was precisely that of bog water.

In sailing from Shannon Harbour, however, the river acquires a new and interesting character superadded to this. It is still indeed a swamp, but very beautiful. Everywhere islands appeared rising just to the line of the water, and displaying a surface hardly discernible from it, except by the hay ricks which proved their fertility. By and by the islands were thickly clothed with wood; and as the vessel wound between them in narrow and intricate passages, I might have imagined myself in the wilds of the new world. The trees appeared to spring from the deep, for the low banks were completely submerged. Before, behind, and around us were these floating clumps of foliage; and vistas opened here and there by our side, showing other islands, and a further expanse of deep and tranquil water. I do not know that, in viewing natural scenery, I have ever felt emotions more new, and more delightful. The romantic associations that are suspended while the world is present, come back upon my heart, and I felt that I was enjoying the reality of a dream.

We at length reached Banagher, a thriving little town, with a stone bridge over the Shannon, and a canal by its side for vessels to pass. The passage is defended by two small forts, one at each side.

Soon after, the ruins of Meelick Abbey on the right bank made me almost regret that I had

chosen a conveyance which admitted of no dallying on the route. The following brief notices, however, collected by an Irish periodical no longer in existence, will serve a little better perhaps than my own lucubrations.

“The Abbey of Meelick, or, as it is sometimes written, Milick, is romantically situated on the banks of the river Shannon, in the barony of Longford, in the county of Galway, which was anciently denominated Silanchia, or the territory of O’Madden, and was founded by one of the dynasts of Silanchia, in the year 1474, for conventual Franciscans.

“Meelick is nearly surrounded by the inundation of the Shannon during the winter months; the lands in the vicinity are particularly rich and fertile; most of these were formerly held by the monks of Meelick, but there are now only two brethren, who inhabit a small dwelling house, annexed to the old abbey, adjoining to which they have erected a chapel, where they perform service. —They have a few acres of land on lease from the Marquis of Clanricarde, who is now lord of the soil, the abbey having been, at its suppression, granted to Sir John King, who assigned it to the Earl of Clanricarde.

“In the Munster annals we find, ‘that in the year 1203, William de Burgo marched at the head of a great army into Connaught, and so to Milick, and did there profanely convert the church into a



stable, round which he erected a castle of a circular form, wherein he was seen to eat flesh-meat during the whole time of lent.'

"There is no more ancient inscription amongst the monuments at Meelick than 1643 ; and there is in the cellar of the convent, an hexagonal stone very neatly cut, evidently the boll of a cross, with the following inscription :—

1645, ORATE PRO ANIMA PRECLARI DOMINI, MALACHI O'MADDEN, ET  
MARGARITÆ CROMPTON, CONJUGIBUS QUI ME EREXERUNT.

"The library of Meelick was once rich, but is now reduced to a few mutilated volumes of school divinity, perishing from damp and neglect.

"At present the roofless walls of this once sumptuous building, are mouldering in decay, or falling a prey to the ruthless hands of modern Vandals. The beautiful pillar that once separated and supported the arches, on the south side of the edifice has been torn away to supply head-stones for the humble occupants of the neighbouring narrow cells."

The next town was Portumna ; and here the river expanded into a lake twenty-three miles in length, and we left the steamer by which we had come to enter into another better fitted for breasting the waters of Lough Derg. The latter, however, had not yet reached the station, and I seized the opportunity to visit the town, at a distance of about a mile.

This should hardly be called a town. It is in reality a straggling, yet very substantial village ; and I found a fair going on, with a very respectable show of horses. The situation of the place is central for the neighbouring population of Galway, Clare, and Tipperary ; and although a great crowd had already assembled, vast numbers were flocking in from all parts of the compass. It was still early in the day, and business rather than pleasure seemed to be the object of the multitude ; but here and there I perceived some indications that the evening was looked forward to, and occasionally the twang of a violin came upon my ear like a prophecy. Pursuing my way further among the crowd, I at length perceived that the dawn of amusement was actually breaking—in a likeness which is admirably well described by Mr. M'Clise. on the opposite page. The Irish are not great dancers ; they never dance save on important occasions ; but when they do dance, they dance with that enthusiasm which manifests itself in all their actions, except the action of working.

The young girl before us, although her action is not boisterous, is dancing with soul and body. Her eyes, feet, and hair jig it at the same moment. Her hair, indeed, is rather out of bounds in its amusement, considering that it was actually combed in the morning—a discipline of extraordinary rarity. But this is the consequence of habit, and may easily be forgiven, especially on a fair-day. It will





be seen that this girl is not of northern origin. Her father lived farther down the Shannon, and, from his gait, features, and even name, you may observe that he belongs to that Spanish colony which spread itself over the country west of the river. She is herself Spanish all over, with a dash of indolent voluptuousness which proclaims her ancestry. If she belonged to the country farther north, her face would have been round instead of oval, her eyes small, and her nose short, sharp, and retroussé. If farther north still, she would have rejoiced in the strongly-marked and somewhat rigid features of the Scots.

The large steamer having at length arrived, we embarked upon Lough Derg, a noble sheet of water, diversified with bays and reaches, the banks, generally speaking, highly cultivated, and sloping to the water's edge, with dark hills for the background. Here and there the eye was attracted by a villa, or a ruin, on the shore, or a green smooth island in the middle of the waste of waters. Upon the whole, the scene reminded me more of an inlet of the sea than of an inland lake; although, perhaps, this effect was in part produced by the wind, which blew with some violence full in our face. The clouds rushed and darkened, the waves rose and broke, and the vessel pitched and rolled; and, in short, it was a very respectable imitation of the sea in a smart breeze. A passenger landed in the Bay of Scariff, where the lake is at its greatest width; and

it will give the reader some idea of the real magnitude of the commotion, when I say that the boat, as it receded, disappeared frequently between the waves. Holy Island, with its round tower and ruins, in Scariff Bay, is not remarkably picturesque.

Hitherto whatever of grandeur the picture exhibited was produced by the mere extent of the water; but, as we approached the further end, this was assisted by the magnitude of the hills which form the termination of the view. It was now almost dark, and the massive forms of this end of the vista reminded me of some of the Scottish lakes. After emerging from Lough Derg I landed at Killaloe, and took up my quarters there for the night. The town is well situated on ground rising from the river, and is becoming an important place as the centre from which the efforts are directed of the Inland Steam Navigation Company. In the engraving is given a charming daylight view of this place, with its bridge of nineteen arches, connecting the two counties of Clare and Tipperary.

The ordinary traveller may either proceed to Limerick by a canal, or by the river; but the picturesque traveller has no choice. The river from Killaloe to Limerick is among the finest things in Ireland. Here you have green and sloping banks—there islands like emeralds set in silver—beyond, magnificent woods that fling their shadow over the stream—and, finest of all, the rushing, roaring,







foaming rapids of the Shannon. Within this trifling space there is every thing which, in natural scenery, can amuse, excite, soften, or astonish. The Rapids will not disappoint the traveller, as waterfalls usually do, which his imagination pictures as something colossal both in height and volume. The word rapids gives the idea of a torrent rushing over a sloping bed of rocks ; and the rapids of the Shannon are a mass of water, the magnitude of which may be conceived when it is stated that the river, just before they commence, is forty feet deep, and three hundred yards wide. The descent continues for half a mile ; and, during that space, the foaming waters present, at every step, some new and fantastic combination.

At the commencement of the rapids is the pretty village of Castle Connell, forming an interesting feature in a majestic woodland scene, that would be still more majestic but for its association with seats and villas, whose patrician heads are seen rising here and there over the trees.

The castle from which the village derives its name was the seat of the O'Briens, kings of Munster ; and here the grandson of Brien Boru was murdered, under those circumstances of treachery which so frequently excite at once horror and disdain in the reader of Irish history. The Prince of Thomond, leaving his followers on the other side of the Shannon, threw himself upon the hospitality of Castle Connell, and was received by its master

with generous confidence. In the night-time the scoundrel-guest admitted his soldiers into the stronghold, and slew his entertainer, after putting out his eyes. In later times the castle was the scene of many other adventures more deserving the name of warlike ; till at length, having held out for King James, it was taken by General Ginkle, after a siege of two days, and dismantled, and blown up. The explosion was so great, that it is said to have broken the windows of Limerick, six miles off.

The road from this place to Limerick—for it is impossible, on account of the Rapids, to go by the river—is extremely fine ; and the rich woods which every where meet the eye, give, in *modern* Ireland, quite an original air to the landscape.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Limerick and its Three Quarters—Inhabitants—Female beauty—  
Catholic Churches in Ireland—Influence of the Priests—Clergymen—  
Learning of the Priesthood—Aneedote—The Poor of Limerick—  
Colloquy with the Rich and the Idle—Difficulty in working Miracles  
—Projected Workhouses—Opposition of Mr. O'Connell.

LIMERICK is divided into three towns, each of which, both in moral and physical character, is as distinct from the others as if a continent lay between them. They are called English Town, Irish Town, and Newtown Pery. English Town, formerly the best portion, contains the cathedral and the castle, the latter a fine old ruin almost concealed by the mean houses built against its walls. Here, of course, were at one period the city officers and the wealthy population; but, deserted by these, its huge and tall buildings afford retreats for the poor and the depraved. It might be likened, in some

respects, to the old town of Edinburgh ; but it has nothing of the business and bustle which distinguish the ancient Scottish metropolis. It is cut off from intimate association with the other parts of the town by a canal, which converts it into an island ; and thus, although an integral portion of a busy city, it has the solitary and secluded look of some of the old Italian towns.

Irish Town, at one time the abode of the “mere Irish,” so called in contradistinction to their masters, has not suffered by desertion. On the contrary, in the progress of time and civilization, it has waxed abundantly ; and, as the population of the whole city increased, its shops and stalls became more numerous—for here is transacted the business of the lower classes, both of the town and neighbourhood. The streets are full of traffic ; the bustle is constant from morning till night ; and, if the business of supplying the necessities and luxuries of the poor does not appear magnificent in detail, it is at least of some importance in the aggregate. Whisky is, of course, the grand luxury, and the houses which retail it do not seem to thrive the less for not presenting, in their architecture, like the gin-shops of London, the caricature of a Greek temple. The next luxury, in the magnitude of the supply, appears to be apples. The quantities of this agreeable and wholesome fruit which I saw exposed for sale in the streets here, and in other towns, are beyond any thing of the kind I ever witnessed in other

countries. The price cried in Limerick was twenty a penny.

Newtown contains the quays, the storehouses, the great shops, and the dwellings of the more affluent. It consists chiefly of one very long, and very wide range of street, with short diverging ones, and a square now in progress, with a monument to Mr. Spring Rice in the centre of its enclosure, which is laid out in walks, like the squares of London. The houses of the principal streets are like those of Belfast, nothing more than right-angled brick boxes, without any pretensions to architectural taste; but the streets have a better effect than those of Belfast, from the circumstance of the houses being loftier, generally of four stories not including the sunk area, but, owing to the loftiness of the apartments, the height, I should think, of five stories of a good London house. A few houses in the new square I have mentioned are finished, and one of them is let at £120 a year, the highest rent in Limerick. Many of those, however, in the fashionable part of the principal street are £100 a year. The taxes amount to seven or eight per cent. on the sum at which the houses are rated, which is here, as elsewhere, below the real rent.

The city contains hardly any very wealthy people; few with incomes above a thousand pounds a year, although many approaching that sum. But, though the inhabitants, therefore, do not belong to the class of those who would be called wealthy

people in London, there is a great deal of pretension in their way of living, and an air of fashion in their appearance, which is not surpassed in Dublin. The streets swarm with jaunting-cars; and this is not surprising in a place where every body considers himself entitled to the distinction of keeping one, who possesses an income of £300 a year, or who calculates on being able to spend that sum from the profits of his trade. Almost every person of the slightest pretensions to respectability keeps a man servant; and this can more easily be done since the wages of such domestics rarely exceed £8 a year, except in great houses, where sometimes £10 are given.

While talking of this portion of the community, I must notice the reputation for female beauty enjoyed by Limerick for at least two centuries. I have no hesitation in saying—important as the topic is—that I think the reputation is justly enjoyed. I saw a much greater number of beautiful faces, in proportion to the size of the town, than is usual; and even in the shops I think the average is very high indeed. On a Sunday Limerick presents a fair spectacle in every sense of the word; and the Catholic churches, not only of Limerick, but of all Ireland, exhibit far more of the devotional picturesque than you find in most countries of the continent.

On the continent, generally speaking, there are no galleries. The whole of the worshippers, rich

and poor intermingled, are below, in the nave of the church, and are usually seated on rude, rush-bottomed chairs. In Ireland there are galleries, laid out in pews, for the rich, and only the stone floor below for the poor. Among the latter, in most parts of the country, there is a separation of the sexes, the men going to one side, and the women to the other; all kneel, for there are no chairs to sit upon; and the only difference observable among them is, that some spread their handkerchiefs under their knees. Occasionally, however, a votary of a higher class is seen in the same devotional attitude, either engaged in the sacramental ceremonies, or paying her homage to the Virgin. An instance of the latter is annexed, produced by Mr. M'Clisc.

While mentioning the churches, let me say a word on the subject of the priests. That the influence of the Catholic priesthood in Ireland is rapidly diminishing, I could bring forward satisfactory evidence to prove, had I thought it worth while making minutes of the information I received on the subject in passing along. This is one of the most favourable circumstances I know, as regards the civilization of the country; for, from whatever cause it may proceed, the Irish, while in the hands of the priests, have made no progress whatever, social, moral, or intellectual. I do not accuse the priests:—I merely state a fact which the most zealous Catholic in the country cannot controvert.

Yet the position of the priests with the majority of their flock, affords them very high advantages. The very nature of their emoluments involves the necessity for constant intercourse. Besides the Christmas and Easter dues, which may be said to be the stipend they receive for instructing, catechising, and confessing, the priest has his fee for marriages, christenings, funerals, and masses. In some places it is the custom for the more easy in circumstances to send him a certain quantity of hay and oats, and for others to cut his turf, mow his grass, and reap his corn. The priest and the flock are of the same rank of life; and, with the exception of theological learning, the former receives no education which could unfit him, by its artificial refinement, for the most intimate association with his parishioners. This association, in fact, does take place—and what is the result? As a means of civilizing the people, the Catholic church in Ireland has been an utter failure; its priests have contented themselves with bringing up their flocks in blind and ignorant belief, without an attempt to expand their intellect, or extend their knowledge; and at this moment, although well aware of their real and dreadful wants, they use such influence as they possess in stirring up the miserable creatures to a political agitation which has no reference whatever to these wants. A political priest, of any denomination, is the most odious and mischievous of all animals—and, even if found in religious Scot-



land, he should be swept out of the temple he profanes, as with a besom; but what shall we say of him in Ireland, where the claims of God and nature upon his time and zeal are so numerous and so urgent? I do not venture to affirm that the diminished influence of the priesthood in Ireland is an evidence of the increased progress of education; but I do say that henceforward the one will be found to go on in an exact ratio with the other.

As for the protestant clergymen, on the other hand, they are in general *gentlemen*. They do not seek association with the ragged and filthy inmates of the hut. They mind their farms; exchange dinners with their respectable neighbours; lead regular lives; and die with the reputation of having performed worthily the duties of Christian priests. The presence of such men, with their families, is, doubtless a great advantage to the country. They set a good moral and farming example, and spend a decent income in the district.

The learning of the priests, I have hinted, is purely theological; and so are their manners. The habits of a secluded student engrafted on the rudeness of a clown, are not very attractive; and perhaps this is the true reason why the priests mingle but little in good society, even of their own religious persuasion. However this may be, their learning itself seems to have greatly declined in modern times; a fact which, independently of other proof, is pleasantly illustrated by an anecdote related of

the priory of Mungret, within the liberties of Limerick. A deputation, it seems, was sent from the College of Cashel, to try the skill of the Mungret scholars in the dead languages; and the monks were thrown into some alarm lest any thing might happen to injure the reputation they had so long enjoyed. After consulting together, they dressed some of their most accomplished pupils like peasant girls, and sending them out, one by one, desired them to reply in Latin to any question that might be put to them. One of them speedily fell in with the Cashel professors, who, on asking the distance to Mungret, were startled by receiving the reply in a dead language. This happened again, and again, and again; and at length the holy fathers determined not to venture upon any examination of professors in a district where even the peasant girls spoke Latin, and turning hastily round, made their way back to Cashel.

I have talked of the trade, the wealth, the beauty of Limerick—in fact, of the outside; and that is all which is likely to catch the eye of the cursory visitor, and all which he cares to examine. We have seen that there are numerous individuals enjoying an income of nearly a thousand pounds a year; and that there is abundance of genteel equipages, good houses, and handsome women. Like the *Diable Boiteux*, we have unroofed the city of the busy, the gay, and the fair; and, like him, have left closely covered up the abodes of hunger and

destitution. Limerick however, has not, like other great towns, merely the mixture of poverty and wealth found in all the crowded haunts of mankind. Limerick, in a word, is not a town of Europe, or Asia, or Africa, or America: it is an Irish town.

If I had contented myself with traversing Newtown, and the principal thoroughfares of English-town, and Irishtown, I should have pursued my journey with favourable impressions of the condition and character of the inhabitants. Then I should have seen only a fair intermixture (for an Irish town) of rags with embroidery, of hovels with houses, of concave and convex cheeks. Then I should have been as much amused as pained—may God forgive me for the hardness of heart!—by the absurd devices occasionally detected for appearing to cover the body with raiment—by the transformation of women into men, and men into women, and children into either. But, unhappily, I would needs calculate that the crowds I saw could be only specimens of a few thousands of the inhabitants; and I would needs diverge from the great thoroughfares of business and pleasure, to plunge into the lanes, and alleys, and courts, for the purpose of looking at the remaining classes. Now, I have frequently, in the course of this volume and the preceding one, tested the endurance of my readers, by carrying them into discussions which, in the bygone age of dandies and dandisettes, would have inspired either contempt or dismay; but here I will spare them and

myself. I cannot, and dare not if I could, describe the horrors of Limerick destitution. Their existence is alone sufficient to blast the character of Great Britain in civilized Europe, and to all succeeding ages.

Mr. Inglis, after giving a few instances of what he saw himself, observes, that with such scenes before him, it did seem to be an insult to humanity and common sense to doubt the necessity for a legal provision for the Irish poor. But, unfortunately, the individuals who doubt this never had such scenes before them. Their argument is this: "The destitute in Ireland are either those who cannot get employment, or those who are too unwell to labour. All we have to do, therefore, is to provide work for the idle, and erect hospitals for the sick." Can any thing be fairer? Can any thing seem more consistent with reason? Very well: let us create employment; let us build hospitals. And now, let us go into the recesses of Limerick to work miracles.

"Ho, ye sick! Come forth and be made well." And the sick come forth, or are carried forth, and are sent straightway to the hospitals.

"Ho, ye idle! Come forth, for here is employment." And the idle come forth, and begin to work joyfully. But still the cries of hunger, and the moans of helplessness are heard issuing from the damp cellars of Limerick. What is this? Have they not heard our proclamation? Bring them all out. There is one before us who, from

the number of his fellows, may be taken to represent a class.

“Why do you not go to the hospital?”

“Because I am not sick.”

“Why do you not work?”

“Because I cannot.”

“Of what do you complain?”

“Of hunger, which, from long continuance, has taken away my strength. I have no sickness, yet I cannot work till I get well. This cotton rag, which was once a part of my wife’s gown, is all I have for clothes in the world.”

“Is this your wife? Tell us, woman, why you do not work.”

“Do you not see my two infants, both tugging at the same moment at my exhausted breasts? What can such as I do to your railways and canals?”

“But we have employments more fit for your sex and feebleness.”

“Then you must send me to school to learn them; for I guess your manufactories will not pay unprofitable servants. I never learnt to work except in the fields.” But the colloquy is interrupted by a disturbance. A man has thrown down his spade, and refuses to continue his task.

“Of what is it you complain?”

“Of having too much to do.”

“You are an idle, ungrateful reprobate.”

“I am just half of that, and always was. I have been idle all my life, and have never dared even to

hope for full employment. I have lounged about the streets, and basked in the sun, from my childhood up; and I would still be contented, if it could still be obtained, with the handful of dry potatoes earned every now and then by a little start of labour. But, God bless you, do not think me ungrateful! I am sure you mean well; but you do not know us. There are some among us, as you see, who labour like horses; but what are those to do who have the habits of a life-time to conquer before they set to in earnest? You discharge me because I cannot work like the rest. Very well, I must go back and starve in my cellar: but do not you, with all your piety, expect to perform miracles in Ireland."

It may be inquired, whether I mean that workhouses should be established for the support of the idle; and I reply, that they should be established for the purpose of putting down idleness. Until then, beggary, that grand evil of Ireland, cannot be repressed, for you must give the beggar an alternative. The alternative cannot be employment, for in that case the beggar would not, and perhaps could not, work hard enough to earn his subsistence. There must be something to fall back upon in all emergencies. There must be a **WORKHOUSE**; and that workhouse must be on such a principle as to render it an efficient test of destitution.

I have talked, on several occasions, with some doubt as to the utility of Mr. O'Connell's schemes;

but this must be considered entirely with reference to the concerns of the peasants. This is not a political work ; and, without sufficient elbow-room for argument, I would pass no opinion, favourable or unfavourable, on merely political questions. This I may say, however, that the Poor Law project—opposed by Mr. O'Connell—is the only great measure which has hitherto been brought forward, for even the ostensible purpose of benefiting proximately the mass of the Irish nation.

## CHAPTER XV.

Revolution in Manners—Progress of Democracy—History of the Struggle—Proofs—Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. O'Connell—Degradation of Literature—Convergence of the two extremes of Society—A dream of the Future—The Crisis—Impossibility of Revolution in England—*Delenda est Carthago*.

ANOTHER subject, not exclusively connected with Ireland, cannot fail to be suggested by the name of O'Connell: I mean the personal abuse in which he deals so largely himself, and which is so liberally bestowed upon him by others. It is a pretty general opinion, that there is a certain coarseness of character about the great Agitator which makes him a fit target for such unsavoury missiles, and that in his own parts of speech there is a *peculiar* "well of English"—not "undefiled." This is the opinion, however, of persons who are capable of seeing only a single object at the same time, and who have not the advantage of being able to examine it in its as-



sociation with the surrounding context. The peculiarity alluded to is the peculiarity of the epoch ; and, if Mr. O'Connell shares in it to a greater extent than others, it is simply because he puts himself forward as the prominent Irishman of his day.

I am old enough to remember, and to be able to trace distinctly, a mighty revolution in manners, which has already effected great changes in the world of society, without its denizens knowing any thing about the matter. We are in the habit of referring the coarseness—some would say blackguardism—which pervades the public assemblies of the present day, to political excitement—to the character of the individuals—to the peculiar circumstances of the meeting—to any thing, in short, rather than its true cause. We ought to remember, however, in the first place, that a thousand parallel cases must have occurred before, in which no such characteristic was observable ; and, in the second place, that the characteristic is not confined to one, or two, or three cases, but belongs to the great majority. At political meetings—at public dinners—in the House of Commons—in the House of Lords—language is now habitually used, and habitually tolerated, which not a great many years ago would have produced duels and arrests without number. In the newspapers, the most faithful mirrors of the public mind in a free country, we find a coarseness and hardness of scurrility which is altogether without parallel in the civilized world.

This is, to a certain degree, the necessary attendant of the progress now making so rapidly by England towards democratical forms and feelings. Already the business of parliament is in a great measure transacted out of doors ; and the audience of the orator is not a few hundred gentlemen, but the nation at large—of which the overwhelming majority consists, as elsewhere, of the lower orders of society. In this state of things, one of the most important component parts of eloquence must be strength of language, and strength of language must be inseparable from coarseness of expression. Some persons may deny, as I have heard them deny, the necessity of coarseness, and say that reason is the one thing needful ; but such persons have either not mixed, as I have done, with the classes referred to, or else they are mere sycophants of the majesty of the People, and therefore not worth an answer. Be it remembered, that we are as yet neither a pure and complete democracy nor its opposite. We are at this moment in a state of transition, in the midst of a war of opinion so equally matched, that, without a knowledge of the history of the struggle, it would be impossible to predict the event.

The history of the struggle is not so surprising as one would be inclined to think at first sight. Men did not rise up at once, with a spring, and a roar, like those of wild beasts, to fix their sacrilegious grasp upon the things which time had rendered venerable, and which custom seemed to have made

indispensable. The actual assault, it is true, was somewhat sudden ; but the predisposing causes had been long in operation, and there were few reflecting minds that did not foresee clearly what was coming. During a war of twenty years, the bayonet was the grand censor of the press and the tongue ; but it could not arrest the progress of public opinion, however it might check its expression. The current of thought still rolled on, although below the surface.

We were at that time shut up in our prison-island from the rest of Europe, grappling in the dark with our own prejudices, and thus stamping a character upon the struggle of mind purely and essentially English. The passion for money, the idiot admiration of mere rank, the pitiful obsequiousness to fashion—all essential parts of the national character, and, comparatively speaking, unknown in most other countries, except as subjects for rail-lery and derision—these were the chief moral barriers that stood in our way. The malcontents who raised their voices the loudest, were those who had the least to do with wealth, title, or politeness. They had “no stake in the country ;” they were called plain John, or Peter ; they were vulgar persons. Contumelious names were invented for them, as in the days of the Cavaliers. *Respectable* men, who had the misfortune to think that the political ought to keep pace with the moral machine, or, in other words, that a new era, a new generation,

a new state of advancement in education and knowledge, required new modifications of the details of government, either shut up their heresies in their own bosom, or sacrificed their station in society for the sake of promulgating and defending them.

When Europe was sufficiently well drained of blood and money, and the nations could no longer afford to fight, they made peace; offering solemnly up together a holocaust of victims, and sending off one scape-goat to the wilderness of ocean, with the sins of a dozen kings upon his head. The battle of Waterloo operated upon public opinion in England like the opening of a valve in a steam-engine. It did not *create* the magnificent power which became manifest: but it permitted its explosion. Voice after voice arose amidst the silence of peace, till the sound was echoed over the whole country. What before had been called revolution was now reform; and respectable men, afraid no longer of losing their respectability, crowded to its standard. In a singularly short space of time, the grand and interesting spectacle was offered to the world, of political demands which, but a very few years before, would have been answered with the dungeon or the gibbet, receiving the solemn sanction of the legislature, and passing into the laws of the country.

Even were the progress of Democracy not attested by legislative enactments, it would receive abundant confirmation from the state of manners alluded to. The Tories are now what once might

have been called conservative whigs; the whigs, radicals; and the radicals have found in the hitherto lowest deep a lower still. But all these denominations are, in language and external deportment, very nearly the same. A man of genius, who is himself a lord, is said to have called the House of Peers, to their faces, a mob; and the expression was not only conformable to the spirit of the age, but absolutely true in itself. Why should there not be a mob of lords as well as of commons? There may be, and there no doubt is, a portion of the peerage, as of other classes, composed of good and sensible men; but the attributes of its mob are identical with those of other mobs, namely, ignorance, prejudice, and headlong presumption.

It was a fine spectacle, to see Sir Francis Burdett rising from the political siesta in which he had so long indulged, to denounce the vulgarity of Daniel O'Connell! Sir Francis was the champion of freedom before the name of the Agitator had ever been heard. I remember, when a young lad, my pen knives and cotton pocket-handkerchiefs were inscribed, in characters indestructible except with the fabric of the articles, "Burdett and Liberty!" Sir Francis, however, was not only the champion but the patron of reform. He devoted himself to the cause, when such devotion on the part of a man of rank was esteemed a condescension; and thus the habits of the gentleman were rather strengthened than destroyed by the feelings of the democrat. In

all his noon of fame, I never felt a higher and more affectionate respect for him than when he called upon the club at Brookes's to eject O'Connell from their body, as a man unfit to associate with persons of honour. My respect, however, was of that kind which we bestow upon poetical characters, whose feelings, however high and beautiful in themselves, are not exactly calculated for the meridian of our own times; and it did not hinder me from joining in the general smile provoked by the unconscious Irishman's reply.

The change I have mentioned, it must be observed, has not taken place in a single taste, but in all. Literature itself is pervaded by the coarseness of the time. The most successful works are works of fun and drollery—the broader the more successful; and on the stage Jim Crow fills the boxes better than Hamlet. The time has gone by when, retiring from this working-day world, we dreamed away our idle hours in the bowers of Poetry and her sister Romance. I believe I am correct in stating, that from the publication of Mr. Bulwer's noble story of "Rienzi" inclusive, up to the present moment, not a single work of imagination, with the exception of those which have coarse humour for their basis, has paid its expenses. This has no doubt been partly caused by the impolicy of the trade, in teaching the public, and the circulating libraries, that instead of paying a guinea and a half for ephemeral books on their first

appearance, they may obtain, by waiting a reasonable time, a reprint of such as prove to be worth buying, for four or five shillings. Still it cannot be denied that the taste for such luxuries of the fancy has declined, and that, at least for the present, the poet's and novel writer's occupation is gone.

But while, in this state of moral revolution, the upper classes are sinking to the tastes and habits of the lower, what is the nature of the change operating upon the latter? The change, however mighty and magnificent in itself, however big with important results not only to England but to the world, is as yet hardly observable in public manners. Even the mechanic—and he belongs no doubt to a class which is still comparatively small—who, instead of retiring from the labours of the day to the public-house, betakes himself to his humble room to devour the cheap literature which is on all sides presented to him, exhibits but little alteration in his deportment and language. His external character retains in a great measure the colouring it originally imbibed from his station in society. Swallowed up in a crowd of uninformed beings; engaged in the daily conflict of opinions and prejudices—for all in this class are political zealots—he is still generally speaking rude, presumptuous, and intolerant. But give him a little time, give him only a few years for the development of the mental energies which have been fairly awakened;

let the proselytism of science, and general knowledge, go on at its present rate, till it comprehends, as it assuredly will comprehend, a majority of the working classes—and then see what will be the result! At this moment the whole country is teeming with societies of mechanics, instituted for the purpose of communicating and acquiring knowledge; the workshops resound with disputes on subjects of science, literature, and legislation; every tap-room has its newspaper, in general read aloud to the company; the streets of London swarm with dark and dingy coffee-houses, into which a *respectable* person would hardly venture even out of curiosity, but where the labouring man, in addition to his insipid beverage, has books of reference at command, and not only the political journals, but the elegant, as well as useful periodicals.

A corresponding change is visible in the education of the upper classes, otherwise the convergence of the extremes of society, in point of useful knowledge, would take place much earlier. Children's books are all of a more practical nature than heretofore; and I frequently meet with little boys and girls who are able to puzzle their papa in matters relating to the details of history and geography. In other branches, such as astronomy, chemistry, and botany, the present generation is vastly better informed than the last; while it is rare to find a child altogether ignorant of the processes of the more interesting arts.



While this convergence is going on, the coarseness of the present day will gradually disappear, for it is the property of knowledge to refine as well as to enlighten. The lower classes, or in other words, the great majority of the nation, whose influence is at present felt in the decline of gentlemanly courtesy, will force the upper, unable to maintain their superiority on an equal field, to seek a vantage ground in good-breeding and the polite accomplishments. The character of the entire people will thus be raised far above its level of to-day, while the same apparent inequalities will continue to exist on the surface of society. At that epoch, and not till then, the crisis will arrive, the instantaneous coming of which has been dinned into our ears as long as I can remember—a crisis which some politicians of our day are endeavouring, with as much folly as wickedness, to bring on before its time. At that epoch, there will flourish in this country a pure DEMOCRACY.

But start not, reader, at the word. A democracy is not an anarchy, but a popular government, or a government adapted to the condition, and kept in motion by the united intelligence, of the nation at large. I see nothing in the idea of a democracy inconsistent with the form of royalty which subsists in these realms. I see nothing in the idea of a democracy inconsistent with hereditary nobility. It seems to me to be not more inconsistent with reason that a child should succeed to his father's

title than that he should inherit his land, or money, or anything else which gives him an advantage over his fellows, and is not injurious to the commonweal. A limited authority like that vested in the Queen of England is not only reconcilable with a democracy, but would derive its surest guarantee from being surrounded with popular institutions.

But all this is only a dream of the future. If the advocates of universal suffrage are really acquainted with the almost brutish ignorance which still pervades a very great portion of the lower classes of the country, I think they must be insane. But the charitable supposition is, that the friends of such wild doctrines are mere theorists who know nothing about the formation of society in any other grade than their own. The SCHOOLMASTER is your true revolutionist. He does not bawl, or curse, or struggle, or grasp at impossibilities. He pursues his calling in silence—working with the very stuff which the human mind is made of, and working, therefore, towards a result which, however distant, is absolutely certain. The Schoolmaster is the hero of the age, whose deeds, if historians were philosophers, would far outvie in splendour those of Wellington or Napoleon.

“The crisis is coming!” has been the cry ever since I can recollect—“Our destruction, or salvation, depends upon this instant!” What puerility! What is there in this country which seems to indi-

cate anything fragile or insecure? If we are incapable of understanding history, have we not at least eyes to see, and ears to hear, what is passing in our own time? Our institutions present an image of the stability of nature—of change without destruction—such as it is impossible to find elsewhere in the world. All things, good and bad in themselves, wholesome and noxious, work together for the preservation of our charmed life. Anchored in the serenest depths of the ocean, the winds howl wildly around us, and the waves dash their spray over our heads, but our ark still rides lonely, proudly, and unmoved.

While the national character remains the same, no revolutionary change, in the popular meaning of the word, can ever take place in this country. A political spasm may convulse us for a moment, but it can produce no permanent effect. When we talk of the Reform Bill, or the Catholic Emancipation bill, or any other bill, being revolutionary, we talk nonsense; for we are aware that all these were slowly and reluctantly granted to the spirit of the age. We do not legislate here in the spasmodic manner of the French. We do not make a constitution, or pull it to pieces, in a fit of enthusiasm. When any great public measure is proposed, the struggle of principles commences, and goes fiercely on, perhaps for years; till it is at length terminated not by the rout, but by the retreat of one party, who, unsubdued though beaten, fortify the passes

in their march, and entrench themselves anew. The lords of the present day evince a spirit worthy of the barons of King John; but, for all that, they submit occasionally to the tide of circumstances. Their own order is unchanged; its foundations are in history; and their rights and dignities are a patrimony descending to them like their estates. The great body of the people, on the other hand, are never in a state of rest; they are subject to perpetual change of condition, social, moral, and intellectual. These two parties must be, and are, political enemies; and, in their enmity lies the security of the country. If the nobility of France had been, like ours, a wealthy and powerful body, the foundations of society would not have been torn up by the revolution. The change, demanded by a new era and a new state of civilization, would have proceeded there with that solemn, august, yet energetic pace which, in all future ages, will make the history of England the wonder and admiration of mankind. In our country the lords are not only wealthy and powerful in themselves, but the prestige which encompasses them is more deeply and generally felt than in any other civilized country in the world. The state of rest, besides, which they advocate is associated in the minds of many with ideas of safety; and for this reason they are joined by crowds of the timid on every indication of haste, or rashness, on the other side, and derive an accession of strength from the very energy of

their adversaries. The balance, however, is only apparently equal to us men of to-day, who count votes in the houses of parliament to determine the strength of conservatism. Let us bestow but one glance upon the history of the country since the end of the war, and the advance of democracy—be it for good or for bad—will appear as steady and inevitable as that of the tide.

This, however, is only the view that is taken in his closet by a solitary student unconnected with either party. Very different are the speculations of partizans on both sides! With some, the lords are not a whit less terrible than the dragons of romance, and it is the sacred duty of every man to arm against them; while with others, the reformers are blood-thirsty sans-culottes, ravening about our fertile fields like beasts of prey. But, notwithstanding the extravagance of the journals, and the coarseness of their objurgations, it is impossible for an Englishman not to look upon them with pride, as the representatives of the genius and knowledge of the middling classes of the people. Their coarseness, as I have already explained, is merely an incrustation induced by circumstances, to be rubbed off by other circumstances, but the metal is pure and bright below. I have often thought that from the leading articles of the newspapers alone a selection might be made of literary morçeaux,

whether lively or profound, worthy of any age the world has yet seen.

This is another indication of the character of our own time and nation, which of itself would enable me to smile when I hear some frantic politician cry out, "The crisis! the crisis!" Hundreds of years ago arose these sounds of warning and alarm; and hundreds of years hence they will still be in their youth. Long, long may that boding voice ring over the shores of these queenly islands, "Delenda est Carthago!"

## CHAPTER XVI.

The Shannon below Limerick—Tarbert to Tralee—Physiognomy and Phrenology—O'Connell's Country—The Agitator and the Viceroy—First View of Killarney—The Town and the Lake.

THE most interesting route from Limerick to Killarney is by the Shannon to Tarbert, thence to Tralee, and thence through the Kerry highlands to the lakes. On this occasion, however, I proceeded by the more direct line, by Castle Island. In fact the weather had become so bad that there was rarely a possibility of seeing the country to advantage; and, as it was somewhat late in the season, I was anxious to reach Killarney before the trees were too much despoiled of the many-coloured leaves of autumn. Being partially acquainted, however, with the coast road, I may at least tell the reader what there is to be seen.

On leaving Limerick, the traveller will almost immediately lose sight of the city ; but, by the country houses which now and then present themselves, and the highly-cultivated lands that line the river, he will still feel that he is in the neighbourhood of some great congregation of the human kind. The scenery is as agreeable as sloping hills, and verdant dales, with a noble stream running between, can make it ; and he will imagine, or try to imagine, that the scenes of horror disclosed to him in the city were nothing more than a dream. By and by the river widens till it resembles a great lake ; and, after several fine ruins have been passed on either side, it suddenly opens into a little sea, like Lough Derg, dotted with green islands, and bordered with woods and sloping hills. After crossing this expanse, the banks approach again, although not so closely but that they form a fine bay, with Mount Shannon on the right, and the residence of the Knight of Glyn on the left. Tarbert is little more than a village ; but it stands in a finely wooded bay, sheltered from the sea-blast : for although it is still some distance to the embouchure of the Shannon, this river already assumes the character of an estuary of the sea.

From Tarbert to Tralee the journey is not interesting in its physical features ; although the curious traveller will be struck by the difference observable in the air and physiognomy of the people. The tradition which bears that the sea-coast of Kerry



was peopled from Spain can hardly be erroneous, since a confirmatory proof appears in almost every face you see ; but still it must be allowed that there is very little of the ancestral character observable in the descendants of the Spanish colony. Mr. Inglis, on this point, goes the length of fancying that he could perceive the remains of the old *hidalgo* DIGNITY ; but he is mistaken. The Kerry peasant has a dignity of his own, far better than that of all the nobility in the world,—a dignity arising from the sense of independence. There is no Spanish laziness about him ; and, what is still better, no Spanish flightiness. He works hard, and lives sparingly ; and he goes forward to his task with an energy of purpose altogether unknown to his continental cousins. Let me add, that if he knew anything about the Spaniards of to-day, he would repudiate the connexion with indignation ; and, if invited to lend his assistance either to the Queen's party, or that of Carlos, he would reply—as I would myself—“ Let them alone. Draw a cordon militaire round their degraded country, and let the brutes cut each other's throats as they like.”

I have used the word “physiognomy,” but perhaps the reader is a phrenologist. If so, he will permit me to treat him to a lecture on Irish skulls, taken from the *Edinburgh Phrenological Journal*. I give it as a curiosity little honourable to my countrymen. It seems to me to be about the grossest specimen of ignorant and impudent quackery that

ever appeared in print ; but withal it is so laughable that even the Irish will feel it impossible to be offended.

“ In the North of Ireland, so far as we observed, the head very much resembles the Lowland Scotch, which we regard as originally Saxon ; the coronal surface (the seat of the moral sentiments) is broad, the forehead moderately high, and the line before the ear longer than that behind, while the base is broad enough to give an ample, but not preponderating, developement of the animal propensities. The size is considerable : out of thirty-five individuals, between sixteen and forty years of age, observed in this district, we found thirty-two heads of the form now described, and only three of the *Tipperary* or native Irish shape, which we shall shortly notice. In Dublin we were forcibly struck with the smallness of the head of the educated classes. The general size was decidedly inferior to that of the English and Scotch heads. We had not anticipated this fact ; and yet, after observing it, and tracing the mental manifestations of the citizens of Dublin, it appears completely to coincide with them. We should like to know the average size of fine hats sent by the London makers to Dublin ; we anticipate that it is inferior to that of those sold in London and Edinburgh. We desire also to know the species of literary and philosophical works most in demand for the Irish capital : we are told they are of the lighter description ; such as are vivacious,

but require little vigour or depth to comprehend them.

“In travelling westward, the genuine Irish head appears in Kildare, and prevails in the other parts of Leinster, and also in Munster; it is long, and narrow in proportion to the length; and extends far behind the ear, indicating great combativeness and philoprogenitiveness. Benevolence is not deficient; firmness and conscientiousness, especially the latter, are very generally deficient. Cautiousness is not large; and secretiveness, although frequently, is not usually predominant. Destructiveness is not as large as combativeness. In the town of Cork, the heads of the lower classes are pure Irish; but those of the better rank are mixed. We saw many of the form before mentioned as common about Limerick—many of the English and Scotch figure. Those of the court-houses and theatre at Cork, presented heads decidedly larger than those observed in Dublin. The great *veneration* of the Irish peasant leads him to worship the Pope and the priests, just as the same faculty, undirected by reason or revelation, prompts the Egyptian to worship the crocodiles. Their small conscientiousness gives a feeble check to lying and deceit, which, by polluting the fountain of evidence, renders law impotent, and the attainment of justice nearly impracticable.

“We are disposed to ascribe the origin of the calamities under which Ireland groans, partly to the

deficiency of the national brain. The native Irish head indicates deficiency of reflective powers, strong animal feelings, and ill-balanced moral sentiment. Where such a people came into conflict with a race more highly favoured than themselves, but not under the influence of a perfect morality, (which was the character of the English that subdued them,) their inferiority would provoke insult, while their animal feelings would kindle into a bitter but impotent resentment. In thinking of Ireland, we are apt to imagine the whole of it overwhelmed with want and crime: this is not the case. In the North, the people are intelligent, moral, and industrious; this more pleasing condition is attributed generally to the linen manufacture; but we suspect that the effect is here mistaken for the cause. The developement is in them decidedly and palpably superior to that which appears in the South; so much so, that any tyro in phrenology may distinguish the races; and, in our opinion, the linen manufacture, and all the forms of industry and intelligence, are the growth of higher moral and intellectual powers."

Tralee, which is the county town of Kerry, is a place of great respectability, both in appearance and reality; but there is nothing in it which will detain the traveller longer than is necessary to gird up his loins for his journey among the mountains. If he wishes to see the remainder of the peninsula, at the base of which Tralee stands, he will pass through

some of the finest highland scenery in Ireland. From Dingle he may cross the bay, with a coast on his left hand almost unequalled in the bold and picturesque; and on landing at Cahir-seveen, he will find himself in a wild and desolate yet interesting spot, hemmed in by mountains, and with the sea and the island of Valentia in front. This spot is in the dominions of O'Connell; and near the town an old ruined house is pointed out as his birth-place.

The Agitator, in private life, is said to be a good, liberal, hospitable man. Politics are banished from his table, where men of all parties are received with the same cordial warmth. Notwithstanding this, he has more personal enemies than any other man in Ireland; a circumstance which appears to me to imply a great want of that tact which should distinguish a political leader. Lord Mulgrave, on the other hand, although detested by certain party-men for his politics, is rarely passed over, even by them, without a good word. He has the art of ingratiating himself as an individual, even while offending as a public man. A friend of mine, whose politics ran so high that he declined being instrumental in giving the Viceroy a public dinner, would cheerfully have bestowed three hundred and sixty-five dinners in the year upon Lord Mulgrave. The reason, no doubt, was that his lordship, instead of boring the worthy provost with unwelcome topics, walked through the town with him, commenting on the number of pretty girls they passed. There

is no doubt on my mind that Lord Mulgrave is the best fitted for his post of all the men who ever held it.

From Cahir-seveen the road proceeds along the side of Dingle Bay, exhibiting, for some distance, a portion of the coast scenery which appeared so striking from the sea. As the traveller nears Killarney, passing through several mean villages, he thinks he must have left the celebrated lakes behind, concealed from his view among the mountains; but at length the picturesque bursts again upon his sight, in a character of majesty which makes it something more than the picturesque.

This, I have mentioned, was not the route I chose myself on the present occasion,—or was compelled to choose. I proceeded almost in a straight line from Limerick, along a route which, for the most part, was dreary and uninteresting. Two or three ruins of little note, and various miserable villages, hardly improved the scene; till at length, after passing Castle-Island, the peaks of Mc Gillicuddy's Reeks appeared above the horizon in the distance. By degrees these mountains became distinctly visible; and by degrees the Lakes of Killarney unfolded themselves at the bottom. My first glimpse of the water, however, was sudden. The road had turned to the right, to traverse a wild and solitary dell; and in turning again, to resume our original course, a portion of the Lower Lake, with its mountain boundaries, appeared at the end of a vista







through the hills. Nothing could be finer than the picture thus presented ; and it was viewed through its best medium, the mellowed light of evening.

Killarney I found a disagreeable, mean looking, little town ; and the principal inn was so bad that I was compelled to change my quarters the next morning. At the Hibernian I found myself greatly more comfortable ; although it is a very inferior house in appearance. The charges at both were much too high ; and I think if some spirited person were to establish a really good and moderate inn, either in the town, or, which would be preferable, nearer the lake, it would answer exceedingly well as a speculation.

A description of the Lakes of Killarney ! In a space like this it is impossible ; and, after so many previous descriptions, it would not be desirable. I shall content myself, therefore, with giving the reader a general idea of the scene, and with endeavouring to convey a few of my own impressions. In the Guide Book he will find a sufficiently minute account of all that is necessary to be known ; and in Weld's Picturesque Views of Killarney, he will travel under the guidance of a man of correct taste and of an elegant mind.

Giving precedence to the arts, which, in a work like the present, is not too great humility, I first present him with the opposite view of a nook of the Lower Lake, where he will find many of the peculiarities for which Killarney is celebrated.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Scene-painting with the pen and pencil—Situation of Killarney—Ross Island—Killarney Echoes—The last Prince of the Lakes—Innisfallen—The Arbutus Tree—Points of View—Gap of Dunloe, and the Black Valley—Atmospheric Phenomena—Mucross—River to the Upper Lake—Eagles' Nest—Killarney to Kinmare—Glengarriff—Bantry Bay—Blarney Castle.

“To convey to the fancy,” says the author of one of the earliest descriptions of Killarney, “a lively representation of substantial, visible forms, is deemed rather the province of the artist, who speaks to the eye, than of the mere verbal describer. Yet so limited are the powers of the pencil, that by it the same object can only be represented in one moment of its existence, and under a single point of view; whereas description ranges in a wider field—commands the several changes which time, in its silent lapse, draws along with it—exhibits things in all the different lights and positions in which they can be viewed—discovers new beauties in effects from revealing their causes

—traces under the mouldering ruin stately temples, domes, and palaces, the monuments of a race of mortals long forgotten—takes in an extent of scenery which the unassisted eye loses, and the pencil faintly pourtrays—and throws a mysterious veil over every object, by allusions and details drawn from the stores of history and fable—

“There Arthur lies, and there the Runic bard ;  
Here fell the hero ; there sad hollow anters,  
That grove did hear his moan.”

Such are the advantages of the pen over the pencil ; but what are its disadvantages ? To describe a scene in words, so as to present a picture to the mind resembling the original, is impossible. By means of words we may convey the idea of a mountain, of a lofty mountain, of a rugged mountain ; but this shall not be the identical mountain we wish to describe. Man can be taught only by experience ; and the most magnificent creations of the poet are nothing more than fragments of memory, heightened and gilded by imagination. A man, for instance, who has never seen a mountain, can conceive one, at the bidding of another, only by magnifying the mole-hill which he *has* seen. If a beautiful face be the theme, there arise straightway before him, and blend into one intelligible

portrait, the features of those on whom his heart has doated in youth—

“ The lov’d—the lost—the dead—too many—yet how few ! ”

Words, therefore, act like a spell, conjuring up the spirits of the past, and bringing with them the feelings peculiar to the bygone time ; but it is evident that their operation will not be alike in all, since it must depend not so much upon them as upon the character of the mind to which they are addressed. To comprehend a poet, one must have the spirit of poetry within him.

Another cause of the vagueness of description is, that no two men ever see the same object alike. Killarney is sublime to those who have never beheld grander scenery, while to others it is merely beautiful. But the medium, too, through which the view is taken is not merely the external atmosphere, but the predominant feeling, or humour, of the mind at the moment ; and thus an object is frequent hailed with rapture by one man, from which another turns away with disappointment and disgust. How true, how beautiful, how philosophical is the “ Lover’s Journey ” of Crabbe—that poet of human nature, whose spells become the stronger as they grow old, and whose verses continue to haunt the ear after it has been forsaken by every other touch of music !

May I not conclude that the pencil alone can approximate to natural fidelity, while it is the province of the pen to diffuse over the picture so conveyed an intellectual life?—that the pencil alone can produce the object as it actually exists to the eye, while the pen winds around it the associations that connect the material world with the things of the mind?

I am not about to exemplify this, however, in my notices of Killarney. The few remaining pages I have at my disposal must be devoted to an attempt to convey merely a general idea of the picture; and, in fact, the weather was such, during my visit, that nothing more is in my power. It is impossible to give an idea of rainy weather at Killarney. The water does not leave the clouds—it brings them down; and you feel as if you were looking at the most beautiful scene in nature through a crape veil.

At Killarney which is situated nearly in the centre of Kerry, commences a mountainous region extending to the sea. In almost every valley there is a lake; and almost every mountain hollow, however high its elevation, is filled with water. Add to this, that the district is in general well wooded, and that the elevations are frequently abrupt and rugged, even to the grotesque, and you will understand at once that this part of Ireland must be the very throne of the picturesque. The expanse of water known by the name of the Lakes of Killar-

ney, lies in a group of deep valleys, and forms a reservoir for the streams and torrents of the neighbouring hills. The bed of the Upper Lake, indeed, may be called a gulf, or chasm, rather than a valley; and thus what is mere beauty in the Lower Lake, acquires in the former a character of the picturesque which is thought by some tourists to border on the sublime. Turk Lake, on the other hand, being only half embosomed in hills, but these of a very majestic description, partakes of the characteristics of the two others. Killarney, therefore, is indebted to the *variety* it presents, still more than to its individual features for the character it enjoys.

To allow the reader, who has never been on the spot, to comprehend the locality, I should say that the lower lakes would form a single one, but for a narrow and jagged peninsula, and two small islands, which permit the waters to meet only in a little neck; while the upper lake, at a distance of three miles towards the south, pours its superabundance into the others by a picturesque and tortuous river. These again transmit their overflowings to the ocean by the Laune, an impetuous stream which issues from the northern angle of the lower lake.

Travellers usually embark upon the lower lake from Ross island, the indented coast of which is itself very beautiful. It is the largest in this division of the lake, and has an old castle, de-

formed by a modern building which serves as a barrack for a few soldiers. There is an echo on this island, said to be the finest which the lakes of Killarney afford; the sound being distinctly repeated from various points in the whole circle of the lower lake.

Indeed the echo is not among the least of the wonders of Killarney. In some places the sound is returned by numerous mysterious voices with great distinctness. Smith, in his *Natural and Civil History of Kerry*, describes thus the discharge of a cannon. "When the piece is first exploded, there is no return of any particular sound for near a minute; but then a loud clap of thunder, which lasts for several seconds, comes; and, after a short pause, a second, and so on for several repetitions; like volleys of small arms which are voluntarily answered from the neighbouring mountains and valleys, and at length die away with a noise resembling that of the waves of the ocean beating against a concave shore."

The echo of Killarney, therefore, is what Lord Bacon calls an echo upon echo, or a reverberation of the sound from different points, like the reflection of an object in a mirror seen re-reflected in another. The difficulty which the nymphs find in pronouncing the letter S became known to this philosopher, as he informs us, by the remark of a Parisian, who was greatly edified by an echo at Charenton. "If you call Satan," said he, "the

echo will not deliver back the devil's name, but will say, "Va-t'en."—begone—avaunt!

Ross castle was the seat of the last Prince of the Lakes, O'Donahue; to whom, as we see in the *Collectania Hibernica* the kings of Munster paid for tribute ten dun horses, ten coats of mail, and ten ships. For many years after this hero's death his spirit was seen gliding over the lake. It was mounted on a white horse, which is still sometimes visible to the belated peasant in the foam of the wave. The billows of Killarney indeed are popular called O'Donahue's steeds.

"Of all the proud steeds that ever bore  
Young plumed chiefs on sea or shore,  
White steed, white steed, much joy to thee,  
Who still, with the first young glance of spring,  
From under that glorious lake dost bring,  
Proud steed, proud steed, my love to me.

White, white as the sail some bark unfurls,  
When newly launch'd, thy long mane curls,  
Fair steed, fair steed, as white and free;  
And spirits, from all the lake's deep bowers,  
Glide o'er the blue wave scattering flowers,  
Fair steed, around my love and thee."

Such was the song, if a poet is to be believed, sung by a young Irish maiden, who fell in love with the visionary chieftain, and gave herself the death of Ophelia.



Innisfallen, however, is the glory of the lake ; for notwithstanding all that is said of the other islands, they are little more than low uninviting rocks. O'Donahue's Prison, however, should be mentioned as an exception. It is about thirty feet perpendicular from the surface of the water, and is surmounted by foliage springing, as one would suppose, from the bare stone.

A similar phenomenon indeed is presented in many other parts of Killarney, by the mysterious origin and existence of the plants with which the rocks are covered, and which rise from the crevices of the marble where there is hardly a grain of earth. One would think that their nutriment must be drawn almost entirely from water. Of these plants many are of a very delicate kind, and some reach the altitude they arrive at here only in southern climes. Among others there are the service tree, the vine, the arbutus, the lilac, the rose, the lauristinus, and the cytissus.

Innisfallen is a perfect paradise of groves, and bowers, and glades, and lawns ; in fact, nothing I think can be conceived more richly beautiful. Old authors mention that the island yields so great a profusion of sweet herbage that the kine, which are put into it to fatten, thrive so prodigiously, that their fat becomes a kind of rich marrow in a very short time. It is added that this marrow is too soft and delicate to make candles.

The arbutus tree was probably introduced here

by the monks of Innisfallen although some authors contend that it is indigenous. It is certainly a great ornament and interest of the lake ; growing from naked rocks, and flourishing in all its beauty in the depth of winter. The arbutus is only a shrub even in Italy, and it is not till you reach a much warmer climate that you find it reach the growth of a tree. Yet in Ireland we are informed by Dr. Molyneux in the Philosophical Transactions, it is frequently of four feet and a half in circumference, and thirty feet high. This tree, which is called in the neighbourhood of the lake, the cane-apple, presents at the same moment every variety of vegetable colour. The verdant leaves,—the blossoms, like clusters of white bells—the rose-coloured stalk—the green—yellow—scarlet berries all contribute to surprise and delight the eye.

The fruit of the arbutus is like a large strawberry, but if eaten freely will produce—so say the natives—a sort of lethargy. Pliny appears to have formed also an indifferent opinion of its wholesomeness, calling it *unido*, because only one berry ought to be eaten at a time. Virgil, on the other hand, describes it as the food of the earliest inhabitants of the earth ; and Lucretius assigns it a place with the acorn.

“ Glandiferans inter cerabant corpora quercus  
Plerumque ; et quæ nunc, hiberno tempore cernis,  
Arbuta, pænicco, fieri matura, colore,  
Plurima, tum tellus, etiam majora, ferebat.”





On the opposite side of the lake from Innisfallen, the Tomies, and Glena mountains rise boldly from the edge of the water ; but the visitor should walk round rather than sail across. He will pass by Aghadoe, where are the ruins of an abbey, the date of which is unknown. The western, or great doorway, is the only interesting portion of the building which remains ; and this resembles, both in form and materials, that of the chapel at Innisfallen.

The view of the Lower Lake from Aghadoe is worth a visit to Killarney of itself. Innisfallen and the western clusters lie below you ; while the more distant islands look like projecting points of the land. On the right hand, lining the lake, are the rugged steeps of Glena and Tomies, contrasted with the smooth banks and swelling hills on the left ; and the picture is terminated by Turk and Mangerton rising, huge and stately, behind the peninsula of Mucross. The principal western view is from Dunloe castle ; but from the east there are numerous rival points. From the top of Turk there is a bird's-eye view of the whole scene ; but the effect of the parts is of course lost.

Pursuing his route from Aghadoe, the traveller in search of the picturesque will proceed towards the Gap of Dunloe, of which the description in the opposite page is given by Mr. Creswick, and that which follows by Mr. Weld.

“Amidst the vast mountainous regions on the western side of the county Kerry, there is no scene

which exhibits a more varied and sublime combination of the bold features of uncultivated nature than the Gap of Dunloe. By some terrific and mystical operation, the chain of mountains, at this place, seems to have been abruptly severed, and the stupendous rocks of which it was formed rent asunder, and dispersed in wild disorder through the chasm. On the brow of the mountain which guards the entrance, on the right hand, immense projecting masses of stone, suspended in their lofty beds, overhang the pass, threatening destruction to all who approach this savage solitude; and the vast fractured stones, which are observable at the base of the cliff, plainly indicate that the danger has not always been imaginary. One almost shudders at thinking of the horrible crash which must have been produced by those ponderous stones,

‘Tumbling all precipitate down dashed,  
Rattling around, loud thundering to the moon;’

whilst the echoes, in the still retirement, repeated the tremendous sound through the windings of the vale.”

After passing the Gap, we come to the Dark Valley, which is certainly one of the finest bits of the picturesque about Killarney. A view is annexed of this wild and desolate hollow, surrounded by its dreary hills. As it was altogether impossible for







me to ascend those heights in such weather, I should like again to make use of the pen of Mr. Weld, but have now only room to refer the reader to his elegant work.

In the weather in which I was so unfortunate as to see Killarney, much of the beauty was of course lost. The mountains were merely masses of shadow, without form or character ; and it was only a transient gleam of light, now and then, which enabled me to imagine their real effects. Weld, however, gives an account of rather a curious phenomenon, arising from a different state of the atmosphere. “Occasionally,” says he, “an effect is produced by the setting of the sun on the range of mountains bounding the lake, not less beautiful than rare, and totally different from what I remember to have seen in other mountainous countries ; though doubtless, in particular situations, the same appearance may result from the variations in the atmosphere. I can only attempt to give an idea of it by describing it as displaying the mountain in a transparent state, and suffused with a lively purple hue. Varying, however, from the ærial aspect of distant mountains, all the objects upon them, rocks, woods, and even houses, are distinctly visible—more so indeed than at noon-day ; whilst, at the same time, their forms appear so unsubstantial, so ethereal, that one might almost fancy it possible to pass through them without resistance.”

Glena and Tomies mountains, which form nearly

one side of the lake—the side opposite to Ross Island—present many exquisite points of view, several beautiful bays, and a waterfall called O'Sullivan's Cascade. But since we must not linger over individual objects, let me transport the reader at once to the upper end of the lake on the opposite side.

In the demesne of Mucross, comprehending the peninsula which separates the two lower lakes, Turk Cottage is the best station for the tourist, who has there the mountain of that name on the left, with Glena in the distance, overtopping the hills on the other side of the lake in front; and close by where he stands a cascade plunging down from the heights above him. The peninsula, however, being central, presents at almost every step a new modification of the scene; and it contains in itself so much variety of character, that a very good idea of Killarney may be obtained from it alone. The Abbey is neither so picturesque nor so interesting as the traveller in general expects; but when a sudden vista is opened to it through the trees, the effect is fine for the moment. The church was about a hundred feet long, by a fourth part of this extent in breadth; but the cloisters are the most entire portion of the buildings. It has been remarked that the arches of this rookery of the monks are of different kinds, one side of the cloisters containing Gothic and the other side Saxon arches. Weld attributes the incongruity to the

dissensions of the architects; but I think it may with more reason be set down to the false taste of the age.

The yew tree in the cloisters of Mucross is held sacred by the natives; and they relate a story of an individual who inflicted a wound upon the bark, and was instantly punished by a numbness, which crept over the sacrilegious arm, and spread through his whole frame till he fell down a corpse. The cloisters are sufficiently dark to assist in producing those ideas that are commonly associated with such places; but the gloomy vaults and passages in the interior of the abbey go still farther. It is said that two young ladies, who had thought proper to explore for themselves, were struck with such terror that they fainted away, and were with difficulty restored to animation; but this was doubtless caused as much by the relics of mortality around them as by the gloom of the place. The cemetery, which is still a favourite burying place, being small, the coffins are placed wherever there is room for them; and the consequence is that human bones are scattered every where around. In a passage leading to the cloister, we are told by Weld, he once found a head, "with a considerable part of the flesh of the face, and nearly the entire hair upon it, literally rolling under foot." This familiarity with such objects gives rise, as a matter of course, to the most brute-like indifference on the part of the neighbouring peasants; and the individual who

showed an acquaintance of mine round the place, deliberately broke off with a stick the under jaw of a skeleton (once a neighbour of his own, whose name and history he was relating at the moment), and put it into his pocket.

It was one of the superstitions of the neighbourhood, that a "carbuncle" could be seen in fair weather, at the bottom of the lower lake, in a spot where the water is more than sixty fathoms deep. What a carbuncle was like I could not learn. Pliny describes it as being of a grass green, others of a coal black colour, and others deny that it has any existence at all.

But the peasantry may well be forgiven for relating marvels when the learned believe them. A wonderful spring is mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis, the water of which turns the head or beard grey that is washed in it. This spring was in Munster; but there was another, he says, in the opposite province, Ulster, which had just the opposite quality, namely, the power of preventing the hair from turning grey. There was one, also, in Connaught, which was wholesome to the human race, but poisonous to cattle; and another, in the same province, on the top of a mountain, which ebbed and flowed twice a day, like the sea. All these fountains, however, were eclipsed by one in Munster, of a very peculiar virtue—or rather vice. If any body so much as looked at its waters, it presently began to rain in torrents all over the





province, and continued to do so, till mass was said in a chapel near the spot, and the fountain sprinkled with holy water, and the milk of a cow of one colour. It was reflecting on these things which caused Dr. Gerard Boate, the author of the *Natural History of Ireland*, to doubt sorely whether "that good man" (*Giraldus Cambrensis*) "had not been deceived therein by his credulity."

The lower lake is separated from Turk lake by the islands of Brickeen and Dinis; on the latter of which the visitor is recommended to land. Viewed from this island, Turk mountain acquires the character observable in the annexed engraving.

In ascending the river which leads to the Upper Lake, the first impediment is the Old Weir Bridge, where the current is so rapid as to require considerable effort to get up the boats. The passengers are here obliged to land, in order to lighten their vessel. But in coming down the stream the passage is easy enough, provided one can hit it exactly. Accidents, however, sometimes happen at this spot. One is on record in which the actors were a white and a black man. Their boat upset, and the black man speedily found himself swimming in Turk lake, while his white companion, having suffered more in the descent, was cast ashore on Dinis island, and with difficulty restored to animation. Above the bridge the river is in general tranquil.

After passing several little islands in the river, we reach the Eagle's Nest.

"This remarkable rock," says a traveller of the last century, "presents its principal part to the north, and the river, making an abrupt turn, passes directly under it. It has that bold freedom in its general outline which sets at nought description, and demands the pencil of Salvator himself to express justly. From the ruggedness of its impending cliffs, which almost overshadow the river, it would be truly awful, if the trees and shrubs which crown them did not counteract the effect, by diffusing an air of festivity about the whole, which strips it of its terrors. The parts of it, considered singly, are beautiful; their strange combinations produce surprise."

From the Eagle's Nest, a continuous range of mountain runs to the upper lake. On the opposite side of the river is the famous musical echo. The Voice is supposed to reside in a hollow bay of the steep, covered on all sides with trees.

Of the upper lake, I shall only say that in addition to much of the beauty of the lower, it has an air of grandeur peculiar to itself. It is closely girded by lofty hills, which throw their shadow upon the water, and there is something almost awful in its still and solitary aspect. A characteristic portion of it is given in the annexed engraving, the view taken from Rowan's islands, with M'Gillicuddy's Reeks in front.







One great charm of a scene like this is pointed out with so much elegance of expression by the anonymous author I have quoted at the commencement of the chapter that I shall be excused for copying his words: "The effect of many of these views is, in my opinion, much heightened by the hourly revolutions in the face of the heavens. The vast volume of clouds which are rolled together from the Atlantic, and rest on the summits of the mountains, clothes them with majesty: the different masses of light and shade, traversing the lakes in succession, as the shifting bodies above float over them, exhibit all the varieties of night and day almost at the same instant: the mists interposing their dull, yet transparent coverings to the view, raise new desires of a fuller, and clearer prospect: and the wandering vapours flitting from cliff to cliff, as if in search of the clouds from which they have been separated, amuse the eye with their varieties, and irregular motions."

It will perhaps be observed, upon the whole, that the great charm of Killarney is VARIETY. In many other countries there are as lovely lakes, as picturesque islands, and much loftier mountains; but wherever these are found there is a unity of character in the scenery. We say that one place is wild, another majestic, another beautiful, another picturesque, another merely pretty, and nothing more is required to describe the general aspect of the spot; but in Killarney we find grouped together,

within the circuit of a moderate day's walk, almost every possible variety of the wild, the majestic, the beautiful, the picturesque, and the merely pretty. These beauties, too, are in themselves of the first class. Nothing can be more exquisite than Innisfallen—nothing more romantic than the walks of Mucross—nothing more majestically beautiful than the general aspect of the lower lake—nothing more wildly grand than that of the upper. Mangerton, a dark, dreary, rounded mass, owing to its comparatively colossal size, forms at a distance a striking variety in the picture ; and when that distance is lost

“ Which lends enchantment to the view,”

Turk, till then an insignificant hill, rears its steep and threatening head from a seemingly pathless forest, and flings its dark shadow, floating “ many a rood ” on the lake. All these things, and many more which I have no room to particularize, are fine in themselves ; but it is their juxta-position, their grouping, to which the scene owes its high reputation.

The mountains that separate Kerry from Cork, particularly those called the Slieveagher, were formerly, according to the *Pacata Hibernia*, believed to be impassable ; but now, in addition to the direct route to the southern capital, there is

a communication with the coast line, through the barony of Glanerought to Kenmare. By this new road I left Killarney; and as the car glided along the hills, and through the valleys, disclosing at every turn a new picture of the lakes, I had reason to lament more and more the state of the atmosphere, which was on this day, as it had been for several preceding ones, an equal mixture of air, water, and vapour. Even under these circumstances, however, the ride, though tantalizing, was more than merely agreeable. The mountain passes we wandered through, exaggerated by the medium through which they were seen, appeared of an Alpine wildness; the dull far gleam of the lake below gave the idea of immeasurable depth; and the roar of torrents and rain courses bursting over the cliffs above our heads fell with a solemn and boding sound upon the ear.

Kenmare, called also Nedeem, is a common-place village near the Kenmare river, where it falls into the bay. Here I hired a pony, and a certain John Brenan, an active, intelligent fellow, to conduct us both over the Esk Mountain to Glengariff.

I have rarely mentioned names in the course of this work; but, as at Sligo I deemed it right to correct a mistake which Mr. Inglis fell into respecting the properties of Lord Palmerston and Mr. Wynne, so at Kenmare I think it well to give in my dissent to his opinion with regard to the estate of Lord Lansdowne. If Mr. Inglis had

visited in person some of the trim-looking, white-washed cottages which dot the landscape, I cannot think that he would have given so unceremonious a contradiction to the account of the district current at Cork. Lord Lansdowne has done much; he has built these cottages at his own expense; but he is grossly deceived if he supposes that he has as yet succeeded in improving the condition of their inhabitants. If Lord Lansdowne wishes to know what is the actual condition of his tenantry near Kenmare, he will visit the estate in person, or employ some person on whom he can depend to do so.

The little hobbies of the country, observes Smith, in his history of the county, are the properest horses to travel through it; and a man must abandon himself entirely to their guidance, which will answer much better than if one should strive to manage and direct their footsteps: for these creatures are a kind of automata, or machines, which naturally follow the laws of mechanics, and will conduct themselves much better on those occasions than the most knowing persons can possibly direct them.

In Lough Quinlan, a little way south of the Kenmare river, were, and perhaps still are, the floating islands, described by the same author as swimming from side to side of the lake. He supposes them to be composed at first of a kind of long grass, which, being blown off the adjacent grounds







in the month of September, floats about, "and collecting slime and other stuff," forms the nucleus of the island. The Mexicans, according to Father Acosta, had floating gardens in the lake in which their capital stands, and rowed them to any part of the city they pleased. Herodotus, and other ancient authors, describe such islands as carrying woods and temples; and Dr. Halley mentions, in the *Philosophical Transactions*, that he himself landed upon one, somewhere in Carnarvonshire.

Notwithstanding Smith's praise of the hobbies, the traveller will not find the instinct of his pony of such momentous consequence as he will be led to expect. The route across the mountain to Glengariff is steep, it is true, but that is more the pony's affair than his; and, unless he is very nervous indeed, he will not be sufficiently incommoded by the idea of danger to prevent his enjoying some rock scenery of a very picturesque character.

Glengariff is described in the annexed engraving; and I cannot do better than present the reader with the following pen and ink sketch, by the author of "Sketches in the North and South of Ireland," a book which the tourist will do well to take with him.

"A bay runs in at right angles from the east and west direction of Bantry Bay. This bay is sheltered entirely at its entrance by an island, on which a Martello tower is erected. Thus the land-locked estuary looks to be a lake. In no respect it

differs from a lake, save that is superior. Here no ugly strand, muddy and foetid, left bare by the receding tide: here no deposit of filth and ooze. No; the only thing that marks the ebb is a line of dark demarcation that surrounds the bay, and gives a curious sort of relief (somewhat like the black frame of a brilliant picture) to the green translucent waters of this gem of the ocean. No fresh water lake can be at all compared to it; not even the upper lake of Killarney can stand the competition. Here is the sea—the green, variable, ever changing sea—without any of its defects or deformities. \* \* \*

“Hungry Mountain, with its cataract of eight hundred feet falling from its side; Sugar-loaf, so conical, so bare, so white in its quartzose formation; Slieve Goul, the pathway of the fairies; and Esk Mountain, over which I was destined to climb my toilsome way: every hill had its peculiar interest, and each, according to the time of the day or the state of the atmosphere, presented a picture so mutable—or bright or gloomy, or near or distant—valleys laughing in sunshine, or shrouded in dark and undefined masses of shade; and so deceptive, so variable were the distances and capabilities of prospect, that in the morning you could see a hare bounding along on the ranges of those hills, that, at noonday, were lost in the grey indistinctness of distant vision. Then the glen itself, unlike other glens and valleys that interpose between ranges of moun-

tains, was not flat, or soft, or smooth—no meadow, no morass, nor bog—but the most apparently tumultuous, yet actually regular, congeries of rocks that ever was seen. \* \* \* \* It appears as if the stratifications of the rock were forced up by some uniform power from the central abyss, and there left to stand at a certain and defined angle, a solidified storm. And now suppose, that in every indenture, hole, crevice, and inflexion of those rocks, grew a yew or holly; there the yew, with its yellower tinge; and here the arbutus with its red stem and leaf of brighter green, and its rough, wild, uncontrolled growth, adorning, and at the same time disclosing the romantic singularity of the scene. I know not that ever I read of such a place, so wild and so beautiful.”

This is not much exaggerated; for in fact Glengariff is one of the most romantic spots in Ireland. Romantic I think is the word to use; for it is not merely beautiful, but fantastic, and occasionally extravagant. It is finer than any fresh water lake, and it is so precisely because it is not a fresh water lake. It is an inlet of the sea, disposed so as to resemble in form an inland lake, yet surrounded by the coast scenery peculiar to the borders of the ocean. Glengariff is a place that we cannot readily forget. It captivates the imagination; and, even after a lapse of time, we continue to hang upon its beauties, and vindicate its reputation, as if it were a human mistress.

The road from Glengariff round the bay to Bantry—for Glengariff is merely a nook of Bantry Bay—is extremely agreeable ; but there are scenes at some distance to the left which the tourist, if more fortunate than myself with regard to weather, should not fail to visit. I believe, however, the best way is to proceed at once to Bantry, and thence make excursions to the Pass of Coveleagh and Gougan Barry. The Bay itself, of which a view is annexed, is a fine object. It affords excellent anchorage, and is said to be capable of containing, at one time, all the shipping of Europe. At the entrance of the harbour Bear-island interposes its protection against the fury of the Atlantic ; and, with its rugged cliffs, adds considerably to the interest of the picture.

There used formerly to be a valuable pilchard fishery here ; but, as it is stated in Dr. Brooks' Natural History, the pilchards left the coast completely immediately after the fight between the English and French fleets in 1689. A similar occurrence, he adds, was observed in the Bay of Dublin, where the herrings were frightened away for an entire season by the guns of a pleasure yacht.

The Pass of Corleagh is a deep defile very well worth visiting, if the descriptions of it be correct. "This deep and extraordinary chasm," says the sketcher of Glengariff, "which nature has excavated through these mountains, and which, within





the last ten years, has been taken advantage of in order to make an excellent road between Macroom and Bantry, is really one of the most picturesque things in Ireland. It is well worth a journey to all its rocks and precipices : its cliffs clothed with ivy, and here and there interspersed through the masses of rocks, old holly, and yew tree, and occasionally an arbutus :—and then its strange and sudden windings. You look back, and you cannot find how you got in—before you, and you cannot imagine how you are to get forward. You might imagine that the spirit of the mountain had got you in his stronghold, and here you were impounded by everlasting enchantment. Then the surpassing loneliness of the place—

“ I never  
So deeply felt the force of solitude.  
High overhead the eagle soared serene,  
And the grey lizard on the rocks below  
Bask'd in the sun.”

And now I had arrived at one part of the pass where an immense square castellated rock, or keep of nature's own construction, seemed to stop up the road for ever. The sides of this natural fortress were clothed and garnished with ivy, maiden hair, feathery ferns, and London pride ; and, on the very top of the crag, as if its warden, on the very extreme butting point, a goat, a high-horned, shaggy

fellow, stood—and how he stood I could not explain, or scarcely imagine—but there he was in all bearded solemnity. Salvator Rosa would have painted for a month gratis to be indulged with such an opportunity of fixing such a characteristic scene, and such accompaniments, on his canvass.”

Within a short walk of this place is Gougan Barry, a dark lake forming the bottom of a gulf lying deep among the mountains. It is a savage and solitary spot, although not altogether deficient in human interest, since a small hamlet stands close by, and a ruin raises its monumental head on a little island. This latter is the hermitage of St. Finbar—and not even he of Glendalough chose a site better adapted for the purpose. The anchorite is said to have been the founder of Cork Cathedral; and he had a long line of successors at the hermitage.

Leaving Bantry for Cork, the traveller will at once lose the fine scenery he has for some time past enjoyed; and, although in the interval between Skibbereen and Ross there are some good views, the journey generally is deficient in interest. For a description of Cork I must refer to our volume of last year, and to the annexed view of Waterloo Bridge.

The journey from Kenmare round the coast to Cork is usually shunned on account of its difficulty, by the visitors of Killarney. On one occasion I came myself from Kenmare to Cork by







Macroom; and I found the route sufficiently fertile in interest. My vehicle was a taxed cart, the machine usually employed on mountainous roads instead of the common car, and my horse was one of the best hacks I ever saw. A peasant we came up with on the road, however, was quite as good a trotter; for, although we proceeded at a very brisk pace, he kept neck and neck with us for more than ten miles, for the sole purpose of chatting with the driver. The peasantry of Ireland, in fact, will submit to any fatigue provided you do not call it work. If the gentleman I have mentioned, who endeavoured to get the starving wretches on the western coast to fish for a living, instead of talking of remuneration, had merely said to them, "Come boys, and let us go and have a bit of sport!" the call would have been answered with joyful alacrity.

The country appeared for a considerable distance but little cultivated, yet the houses tolerably comfortable. The river, at length, became little more than a mountain torrent rushing and brawling over naked rocks; and here the entire scene was as wild and desolate as could well be imagined. Again the stream widened, and a few cultivated fields appeared; and so on alternately. The unproductiveness of the country however, did not seem to be the fault of the natives, for I should think it possible to re-

claim only a very small portion of it. The rest, consisting of rocks and stones, appeared to be under the curse of perpetual sterility. We at length reached Macroom, and the aspect of the country became more civilized.

Beyond Macroom is the village of Ovens, where there is a cave divided into numerous passages, and extending, as tradition asserts, to Gill-abbey near Cork. However this may be, I was told that the labyrinth has never in our day been fully explored, although some persons are said to have proceeded above a quarter of a mile. Next come the ruins of Kilrea, consisting of some walls of a castle, and more perfect remains of an abbey of the fifteenth century. The abbey is approached by a long passage, the walls of which are built of human skulls and bones. At four or five miles' distance from Cork is Ballinacollig castle, a square building on the summit of a solitary rock standing in the midst of a plain.

But when talking of castles, it is impossible to omit Blarney castle, although not exactly in the route.

This building is in the neighbourhood of Cork, and was founded in the fifteenth century by Cormac M'Carthy. It is situated on a most romantic spot, and is almost hidden by woods and shady walks, partly natural, and partly the production of man. "A considerable part," says Mr. Croker, "of the

forfeited estates of the family in the county Cork was held by Mr. S—— about the middle of the last century. Walking one evening in his demesne he observed a figure, apparently asleep, at the foot of an aged tree, and, on approaching the spot, found an old man extended on the ground, whose audible sobs proclaimed the severest affliction. Mr. S—— inquired the cause, and was answered—‘Forgive me, Sir; my grief is idle, but to mourn is a relief to the desolate heart and humbled spirit. I am a M‘Carty, once the possessor of that castle, now in ruins, and of this ground;—this tree was planted by my own hands, and I have returned to water its roots with my tears. To-morrow I sail for Spain, where I have long been an exile and an outlaw since the Revolution. I am an old man, and to-night, probably for the last time, bid farewell to the place of my birth and the home of my forefathers.’ ”

I have now brought my task to a conclusion. The task, as I set it down for myself, was, while perambulating the country with my readers, to take the opportunity of giving them such glimpses of that portion of society which forms the great bulk of the nation, as might convey in the aggregate some clear idea of the condition, character, wants, and prospects of the people of Ireland. The nature of the work in which this was to be done I knew would prevent it from being done completely; but I thought the very attempt would be useful.

The English—more especially the English of those distinguished classes among which such books as mine chiefly circulate—know much less of the Irish than they do of the Hottentots. The Irish, they have been taught to believe, are a nation of turbulent and seditious wretches—aliens in blood, in country, and in religion—who die of hunger because they are too lazy to procure food, and who burn houses, and cut throats, out of mere frolic, or instinctive wickedness.

Now just the reverse of this is the case. In Ireland the descendants of the Scots and English form a very considerable portion of the population, and the remainder is made up—like the entire population of England—of different races. The country of the Irish is an integral part of the British dominions; furnishing, in due proportion, the army with soldiers, the navy with sailors, and the treasury with money. The religion of the Irish is, like ours, the religion of the Atonement; and, except in some superstitious practices, extraneous from the matter of the faith, it differs very slightly from that of the Anglican church. The Irish are not lazy because they are Irish, but because, in the first place, they are only half civilized, and because, in the second place, they are nothing more than predial slaves, working for the benefit of the landowner, and destitute of the hope of rising into independence. Their condition having descended from century to century without change,

the laziness inherited from the father is continued in the son, and so transmitted to posterity. The Irish are not so guilty of turbulence, sedition, incendiarism, and bloodshed, as any other nation in Europe would be under the like circumstances. Their spirit is broken by ages of tyranny. They have crouched so long under the lash that they can hardly stand upright. They are brave from instinct, but cowards from habit; and the peasantry every day of their lives are guilty of as despicable acts of poltroonery, in their intercourse with the *quality*, as the serfs of the middle ages exhibited in their encounters with the knights. The outrages which the Orange newspapers gloat upon with such delight are the comparatively unfrequent outbreaks of barbarians, too timid to unite in vengeance, and too sharply goaded by insult, oppression, or mere hunger, to unite in peace.

I must now, however, draw to a conclusion these miscellaneous remarks on Ireland and the Irish. What the prospects of the country are it is not difficult to see, at a period when all the elements of a happy change appear to be in motion. Let the reader consult Dr. Robertson's account of the serfs of the fifteenth century, when, for the first time, their bitter draught was sweetened by Hope, and apply it to Ireland.

“The effects of such a remarkable change in the condition of so great a part of the people could not fail of being considerable and extensive. The

husbandman, master of his own industry, and secure of reaping for himself the fruits of his labour, became the farmer of the same fields where he had formerly been compelled to toil for the benefit of another. New prospects opened, and new incitements to ingenuity and enterprize presented themselves to those who were emancipated. The expectation of bettering their fortune, as well as that of raising themselves to a more honourable condition, concurred in calling forth their activity and genius; and a numerous class of men who formerly had no political existence, and were employed merely as instruments of labour, became useful citizens, and contributed towards augmenting the force or riches of the society which adopted them as members."

But I have done. I have tried to benefit this unhappy people, not by flattery, but by truth-speaking; and, although I know I shall receive no thanks, I am quite satisfied with the consciousness of having performed my duty as a citizen of our common country.





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